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'THE WINTER'S TALE'

'They are even savage, as we call those fruites wilde, which nature of herselfe, and of her ordinary progresse hath produced: whereas indeed they are those which ourselves have altered by our artificial devices, and diverted from their common order, we should rather term savage . . . Those nations therefore seem so barbarous to me because they have received very little fashion from humane Wit, and yet are nearer their original naturaltie. The laws of Nature do yet commande them, which are but little bastardised by ours.' Montaigne.

I.

IT is not perhaps surprising that, while *Hamlet* has received more attention from creative critics than any other work of art (always excepting the Bible), *The Winter's Tale*, which is an assured artistic success, has received very little of that kind of attention. There is no great central figure providing unlimited opportunities for self-identification, and the corresponding vagueness, the inability to provide an adequate objective correlative for the initial emotional disturbance, is not a feature of this play. Yet the range and scale of experience behind the words that form *The Winter's Tale* is much greater and more diverse than such brief notice accorded the play would suggest. For although Shakespeare inevitably uses here material that he employs in *Cymbeline* and the other late plays, the significance is altered, the stress shifted; in each of these plays a new synthesis of his experience is achieved, and in each case it is a complete imposition of order upon an ever-widening range of contacts. It is surprising, then, that even Mr. Wilson Knight and Miss Spurgeon have neglected this play, the former almost dismissing it as being the contrast of *Winter Bitterness* and *Spring Festivity*, a statement not only inadequate, but, in some respects which will appear later, misleading and false.

Another reason for this neglect may possibly be found in the air of sober restraint which pervades this play, the cause of which

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quality is not to be traced to 'flagging vitality,' except insofar as physiological changes must have certain determinant effects not strictly relevant to the present discussion, but rather to a different attitude towards all experience, implying in the artist a more mature sensibility. The imagery, characterization, or whatever one points to, have not that super-abundant vitality and brilliance found in earlier plays such as *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* ; but one finds that the important elements of these earlier plays have, in some degree, been included in the final integration of this play. This, as has been suggested above, was inevitable. The keynote of the play is Grace and Graciousness, terms which occur most frequently in the speeches of Hermione and Polixenes before the estrangement and after the reconciliation of the three main protagonists. But throughout there is a continuous tone of irony, an implicit critical attitude towards all experience, which can hardly be dismissed as the mature recognition of the possibility of other kinds of experience. It is that, but also is so much more that discussion in terms of Mr. Eliot's essay on Marlowe becomes necessary. Such an approach gives the correct focus, giving sharper definition to the significance of Autolycus and the grotesque entry of the bear which kills Antigonus: other accounts make these particular examples almost excrescences in the play. This ironic tone does not work at a uniform level but varies from a terrifying intensity, as in the speeches of Leontes, to the almost casual critical comment on the rustic wenches. At one level it serves to give unity to the diverse elements in the play, and justifies the 'drawing of the throne into a sheepcote.' The maturity which such considerations imply is, naturally, confirmed in still closer examination of the verse, for the maturity is achieved in and through the verse: nowhere else in the plays is there such a skilful exploitation of the possibilities of blank verse. This is not to say that the verse of this play is better, more 'alive,' than elsewhere, but rather to stress the advance made, involving to a certain extent the abandonment of technique previously proved successful. The co-existence of such differing uses of blank verse as are found in the speeches of Leontes and Perdita witnesses to the courage demanded by such an advance. The immediate point is that the verse is adequate ; at no point is the pressure behind the verse too great for it to sustain.

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In *Cymbeline* one noted the skilful counterpoint of Sophistication and Rustic Simplicity, in which were included the essential values and the implied radical criticisms of each mode. In this play there is the same balanced contrast, but more care is taken to emphasize the inadequacy of each mode in isolation, and to provide a more delicate point of balance, having wider and more subtle relations. The two contrasted modes become, in the individual, almost synonymous with Reason and Intuition, thus bringing one of the themes of *Troilus and Cressida* into significant relation with those of *Cymbeline*, and portraying the clash and ultimate fusion of these differing, particularized states of being, as they affect the spiritual health of the individual, and in him that of the society of which he is a member.

This intimate relation between the individual and the state is seen at its most explicit point in the character of Mamilius, the Prince and point of danger of the whole kingdom of Sicilia. As anthropologists we see the significance of Mamilius stressed throughout the play ; it becomes immediately obvious in the first scene, for he is spoken of as ' an unspeakable comfort . . . of the greatest promise . . . one that physics the subject, makes old hearts fresh.' As a personal, tragic figure he does not impress: it is only when one becomes aware of the immense importance of his rôle for the effect on, the part played in, other people, that he becomes interesting. (It is easy to make him into ' one of Shakespeare's pathetic children,' in the same way that one can fall in love with Perdita). In him the Many becomes One, as Dion points out to Paulina:

> You pity not the state . . .
> . . . consider little
> What dangers, by his highness' fail of issue,
> May drop upon his kingdom and devour
> Incertain lookers on.

The stress placed on the desolating effect of his death on the kingdom, and the identification of Mamilius with his father, obscures the personal issue, and the words give no justification for regarding him with such attention: no one near him seems to think of his death in terms of Mamilius, but of other people. Even his father thinks of the tragedy in this way:

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> Heirless it hath made my kingdom and
> Destroyed the sweets't companion that e'er man
> Bred his hopes out of.

The prince becomes almost a projection of his father (' they say we are almost as like as eggs ') and through him the ' wrong ' of Leontes makes of the kingdom a Waste Land, ' the fatal country of Sicilia.' The burden of Scapegoat and Tragic Hero is shifted from Leontes to his son as the latter becomes the concrete symbol of the spiritual health of his father. A large part of the second scene is used to stress the significance of this relation:

> Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
> Twentythree years, and saw myself unbreeched,
> In my green velvet coat, my dagger muzzled,
> Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,
> As ornaments oft do, too dangerous:
> How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,
> This squash, this gentleman.

(One might note here the further identification between Mamilius and Florizel made in this scene). In making this identification another theme becomes explicit, for Leontes looks back regretfully to the time when he and Polixenes could be

> As twinned lambs that did frisk i' the sun,
> And bleat the one at the other.

In that golden age they ' knew not the doctrine of illdoing, nor dreamed that any did,' but now that they are older they recognize this state as temporary, and the inevitable period of adolescence, in which sexual experience has to be assimilated, as painful but necessary. So we can have the ironic inflections of the above lines. This recognition of a painful necessity is not confined to Leontes, for the Shepherd exclaims,

> I would there were no age between ten and three and twenty or that youth would sleep out the rest: for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child . . .

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To make a crude abstraction from the play, it is seen that only in maturity can be achieved that poise which proceeds from a balance of Reason and Intuition, the delicate adjustment of the sensibility to new experience, in which the freshness of response, characteristic of children and of people living within a vital tradition such as that of the shepherds of Bohemia, is not deadened by an excess of the traditional control imposed by the memory of other possible responses. The valuable contribution of the pastoral mode is seen to be in its refreshing spontaneity. Such an abstraction can only be justified when it is immediately qualified by the recognition that at no single point in the play is there just this, but so much more. For instance, as has been suggested, there is always an ironic subtone. The perspective is continually being altered, as in those cases where the characters seem to step nearer the spectator and assume a critical attitude towards themselves ; so there is no suggestion of ' taking sides,' of ' making a statement.'

II.

Thus there is a careful state of balance preserved between the ' good Bohemia ' and the ' fatal country of Sicilia,' neither being in itself an absolute but purely relative to any particular point in the play. Bohemia, however much it may have been in the news through Greene's *Pandosto, The Triumphe of Time,* and the marriage of James' daughter, Elisabeth, was to the contemporary mind a sufficiently remote locality to serve as the generalized setting for Shakespeare's shepherd community. Sicilia, on the other hand, was well known to have been the centre of one of the most brilliant cultures of Europe. Beyond these broad generalizations it is unnecessary to go, though it still seems necessary to point out that, in making these countries almost symbols of the contrasted modes, the particular locality is submerged. (It is easy and slightly irrelevant to remark that the rustics are ' English ' ; they were bound to be and indeed are more so than those of the early plays). The Good Life is seen to be that in which the two kings are together in complete amity, and the subtlety of the balance between them becomes more apparent when one considers the place each occupies. Leontes, who is unable to discriminate among the promptings of his instinctive nature, is the centre of a highly sophisticated court ; Polixenes, on the other hand, is king of a

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country which, as far as we know, is a shepherd community. The relevant characteristic of this latter life-mode is that, although based on the instincts, the range of experience is so limited that the traditional good sense can prevent, in social contacts, friction and waste. Thus Polixenes, brought up in this tradition, is too limited when brought into contact with a wider range of experience, and so it is to this fundamental inadequacy that one would point in explaining Why Polixenes Ran Away.[1] Or, to put it in another way, the Reason which admirably serves the Shepherd is not sufficient for a king. The common factor emphasizing and unifying the two modes is the ironic attitude to both.

In *As You Like It* the attitude adopted towards the shepherds was that of the condescending, sophisticated member of a metropolitan culture, but here, as in *Cymbeline*, the essential values of the pastoral life are recognized, and there is no attempt to falsify these by presenting them in a sentimental light. It is only in Florizel and Perdita that the conventional 'beauty' emerges, and they do not really belong to the shepherds, who themselves do not see this 'beauty.' Like all peasants, they do not have to force into the consciousness that apprehension of the tensions within their environment which, in its unconscious workings, gives to the farm labourer, who rarely is invested with the qualities to be educed from Perdita's speeches, that sense of power which we may call the inherited richness of a vital tradition.

Examination of a few selected passages will serve to make the above distinction clearer. The Shepherd points out the difference between Perdita and his 'old wife.'

> Fie daughter! when my old wife lived, upon
> This day she was both pantler, butler, cook,
> Both dame and servant; welcomed all, served all;
> Would sing her song and dance her turn; now here,
> At upper end of the table, now in the middle:
> On his shoulder, and his; her face afire
> With labour and the thing she took to quench it,
> She would to each one sip. You are retired,
> As if you were a feasted one and not
> The hostess of the meeting . . .

[1]See Arden Edition.

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Unlike the other rustics, who all speak in prose, the Shepherd speaks in verse which is yet very close to prose: it has a remarkably concrete quality, which at one level might be discussed in terms of a realism which is concerned with the depiction of a precise visual impression in the style of Dutch paintings. This visual quality is integral to the whole conception of the rural mode, and is sharply differentiated from the predominately tactile imagery of the Jealousy Speeches. But there is much beyond this, for the movement of the verse enacts the gestures of the speaking peasant, slow heavy gestures—' pantler, butler, cook . . . welcomed all, served all '—which are never quite clumsy, and seem to bring remarkable weight behind each point as if the whole body were speaking. The general impression is one of simple dignity, in which the quality of simplicity does not proceed from a ' lack of knowledge,' but from an habitual directness and unselfconsciousness, which relates this verse to the Ballads. This dignity is, obviously, distinguished from the Grace of Hermione, in quality rather than in kind. It is impossible to mistake the verse of Hermione's speeches for that of the Shepherd's, but there is the same *kind* of gracious dignity. The Shepherd could never say

> Our praises are our wages: you may ride's
> With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere
> With spur we heat an acre . . .

But the strength of the relation lies deeper than that. In the trial scene the insanity of Leontes is set over against the essential sanity of Hermione, whose defence evinces a blend of good sense and dignity:

> But yet hear this ; mistake me not ; my life,
> I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,
> Which I would free . . . etc.

Honour, in a rural sense, is the absolute to which the Shepherd refers all questions of conduct. What is traditional is honourable, because the ' ancientry ' know best, and it is the breach of this traditional honour which provokes his pathetic outburst:

> O Sir!
> You have undone a man of fourscore three,
> That thought to fill his grave in quiet, yea,

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To die upon the bed my father died,
To lie close by his honest bones ; but now
Some hangman must put on my shroud and lay me
Where no priest shovels in dust . . .
Undone! Undone!
If I might die this hour, I have lived
To die when I desire.

It is the realization of a breach in traditional ways of life, and as such would be that of almost all peasants, whether of the Basses Alpes, Wessex or the Fens. No explicitly religious sanctions are invoked (the priest is hardly more than a sexton) but, rather, if a label must be given to it, this attitude is that " Buddhist union of God and Death ' which Mr. Empson finds in the novels of T. F. Powys.[1] But this should be amplified by pointing out that this attitude involves a close identification of this united God and Death with a particular locality, so that the emotions are, compared with the more cosmopolitan ones of Leontes, merely parochial as regards their immediate operation. Indeed there is frequent suggestion of this vital opposition between the limited nature of the rustic mode and the wider, more inclusive one of the Court. The suggestion of irony implicit in the Shepherd's outburst, is part of a slightly comic note in the scene, which is of the same kind as that in the Jealousy Speeches though very much less in intensity ; yet the Court suffers in the comparison. Later, when his son is made ridiculous by their altered fortunes, the Shepherd still remains dignified:

For we must be gentle, now we are gentlemen.

The limitations of the shepherd community are readily recognized, but they do not necessarily invalidate the essential values of that mode. The sheep-shearing feast, with the store of good things necessary to such an occasion and the subsequent feasting and dancing, provides a very genial background to the old Shepherd. This aspect is emphasized by the fact that these values of growth and fertility are set in a superhuman scale. The temple of Apollo is placed in a fertile land, described in terms reminiscent of Duncan under the battlements of Dunsinane:

[1] *Some Versions of Pastoral.*

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> The climate's delicate, the air most sweet,
> Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing
> The common praise it bears.

The resemblance is not purely coincident: Leontes, in his jealous insanity, completely neglects the oracle.

This continual twisting of a seemingly simple attitude is achieved in an amazing variety of ways, as for example when the ballad singing is used, not only to reinforce the fertility aspect of the rural mode—music is always a beneficient agent for Shakespeare, as in the instances of the re-animation of Hermione, and the remarkably subtle use of it in *Antony and Cleopatra*—but also to expose the credulity of the rustics. On the one hand they are all remarkably proficient; Mopsa and Dorcas 'had the tune on't a month ago,' and the pedlar can say,

> I can bear my part: you must know 'tis my occupation; have at it with you.

But, on the other, Autolycus makes it a cover for his thieving, and we are treated to the spectacle of the peasants credulous as children of the marvellous newsballads of usurers' wives 'brought to bed of twenty moneybags at a burthen,' which, detached from its context, would be merely a comic 'prodding of the rustic.' As it is, it forms part of the complex tissue of responses which is the mature attitude towards rural life; one regrets that it still seems necessary to point out that this has very little in common with the contemporary, best-seller, attitude.

The control provided by the rustic conventions over the instincts upon which they depend, does not protect the shepherds from the more clever and less scrupulous members of the community, for Autolycus, who provides the point of criticism for this mode, declares that 'every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work.' The position of this 'careful man' in the community needs some scrutiny; he is definitely of the people, but no shepherd, a vagabond who has lost the radical connection of a fixed abode, but still lives in the old traditions, his intelligence being such that he understands the 'doctrine of illdoing' and its value to him. His quickwitted huckster's patter shows up in sharp contrast to the heavy dance

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of the saltiers. He is much more than a comic pedlar ; there is more than a hint of the 'old English humour' which Mr. Eliot finds in Marlowe and Jonson.

> He has a son, who shall be flayed alive ; then 'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a wasp's nest ; then stand till he be threequarters and a dram dead; then recovered again with aqua vitae or some other hot infusion ; then, raw as he is, and in the hottest day prognostication proclaims, shall he be set against a brickwall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him with flies blown to death.

This reads like a transcript from the earlier Elisabethan journalism ; its effect in the play is to give that air of unreality, of incredibility such as is evinced by all the protagonists themselves towards the end of the play, which, in its conflict with the strongly concrete nature of the imagery, generates an energy which destroys all immediate, simple attitudes at any particular point. The scene from which the above passage is taken is full of conventional Jacobean satire, which is subtly related to the main themes.

> . . . receives not thy nose court odour from me . . . etc.

But it is perhaps significant that this fierce irony does not destroy a different kind of attitude to the rural life, which, on the surface, is most exposed to it. During the courtship of Perdita and Florizel, the more conventionally pastoral attitudes emerge. Immediately one notes that care is taken to dissociate these two from the real shepherd mode: Florizel is confessedly a courtier 'obscured with a swain's wearing,' and the Shepherd soon points the difference between Perdita and his 'old wife.' (In this connection light is thrown on the admiration for this kind of attitude to rural life exhibited by Collins). Perdita speaks in verse of a buoyant freshness, which is tinged with a delicate sense of incompleteness.

> . . . daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses,
> That die unmarried ere they can behold

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> Bright Phoebus in his strength—a malady
> Most incident to maids.

The immediate impression of a naïve directness soon has to be qualified when closer examination is made, as for instance in the last two lines where the simple account neglects the suggestions of irony and *regret*. The movement of the verse is a swelling one and in this is remarkably like that of Florizel's

> When you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' the sea . . .

Obviously it is the movement of Spring that is being enacted, and Spring is correlated with youth. Consideration of the sexual imagery in Perdita's speech reveals the difference between this verse and that in the rest of the play: her attitude to sex is that of her description of the ' pale primroses ' ; ' bright Phoebus ' is hardly more than the ' muzzled dagger ' of the youthful Leontes. The reasonable old Shepherd is tired of youths ' getting wenches with child.' Between these two extremes, with Leontes is encountered the Sex Problem of *Hamlet* and the Bitter Comedies. Here the problem, the usual Jacobean one of the breach between Reason and Desire is given a wide context of related emotions. There is an almost pathological study of the birth and growth of jealousy, regarded as an integral part of adolescent experience and made part of a whole mode of apprehension. The movement of this consciousness is caught in the verse:

> Is whispering nothing?
> Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
> Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
> Of laughter with a sigh?—a note infallible
> Of breaking honesty—horsing foot on foot?
> Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
> Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? . . .

It is superbly managed. Gradually the speed increases until all restraint is completely lost ; or, putting it in another way, there is a peculiar sense of exposure of the nerves, which at its crudest level is almost completely tactile. Leontes is acutely aware of ' goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps.' If it were just this, it

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would have no greater value than the corresponding nervous state produced by such works as Bartók's last String Quartet, but this is but a part of a complex disorganization which rapidly becomes more inclusive and more suggestive. This acceleration is seen in the jerky movement, the telescoping of phrases which become more and more elliptical, and the progressive repetition. In the speech

> Inch thick, kneedeep, o'er head and ears a forked one!
> Go play, boy, play: . . .

a further element is seen even more plainly. The emotions are underlined so heavily that they almost become caricatures of the original feeling. The reference back is to the native folk plays when one notes the pelting disgust, 'the savage, comic humour' as Mr. Eliot would call it, of these lines:

> Now while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,
> That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence
> And his pond fished by his next neighbour, by
> Sir Smile, his neighbour . . .

This represents the irony, persistent throughout the play, at its most intense, since it is here that the feeling is most violent, and where there is not the slightest rational restraint.

The symbol of this sophisticated abjuration of reason is the dream: Leontes, in his adolescent jealousy, suffers from 'bad dreams'; Hermione says to him,

> My life stands in the level of your dreams

to which he answers,

> Your actions are my dreams:
> You had a bastard by Polixenes
> And I but dreamed it.

Leontes finds value in these bubbles of the subconscious which are his dreams for to him they present another version of reality, another mode of apprehension than the reason of Polixenes or of Camillo, which involves this central problem of appearance and reality.

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> Affection! thy intention stabs the centre ;
> Thou dost make possible things not so held,
> Communicatst with dreams ; how can this be?
> With what's unreal thou coactive art,
> And fellow'st nothing ; then 'tis very credent
> Thou mayst cojoin with something else . . .

The functional importance of the dream symbol is, then, to be sought in consideration of the parallel function of the acid critical irony in its various modes. Antigonus loses his life putting trust in, being ' superstitiously squared ' by, his dream, while Perdita learns reason and wakes from hers. This last example is most explicit, for her dream is actually waking reality. There is never an absolute conviction of reality in any simple sense, for the continual alternation is too rapid, and the air of equivocation induced by the ironic modes and the sense of double time is too persistent for any plain condemnation or approval of either the rational or the intuitional modes of apprehension in their crude distinction. Yet this never results in vague fluidity because of the curiously concrete quality of the verse, the air of sharp definition of each image, whether it is implicit in the neurotic exposedness of Leontes or the reasonable, poised vision of Camillo.

The deficiency of the almost Surréaliste trust in the intuitions, the Dadaesque ' *croyance indiscutable dans chaque dieu produit de la spontaneité,*' lies in its complete disregard of the healthful function of the reason in organizing these impulses into a coherent whole. Isolated from the context, the vision of Leontes is that of Tourneur and Marston, and its origin has been ascribed by Lawrence to the impact of the knowledge of venereal disease, an origin which would give an obvious significance to the disease imagery of this play. It is a measure of Shakespeare's genius that he was able to assimilate this vision into the final synthesis of the play. In contrast to the disintegration of the king is placed the integrated balance of Camillo, the sane man of good sense. This impression of the latter is produced in the first scene:

> You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely.

He never lets impulsive action lead him astray, although he has a refreshing spontaneity of response (there is a vigorous buoyancy in the verse of his speeches).

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I may be negligent, foolish and fearful ;
In every one of these no man is free,
But that his negligence, his folly, fear,
Among the infinite doings of the world,
Sometimes puts forth.

But, although so poised and stable, Camillo cannot by himself symbolize the order imposed on 'the infinite doings of the world,' for this order does not rest in one man but in a delicate adjustment of contacts between varying personalities. The values of the rural mode have to be fused with those of the sophisticated court, a balance of Reason and Intuition effected. The necessity for such a process, which one notes has nothing essentially to do with courts and rural communities as such, is generally realized, and has been variously described. Mr. Middleton Murry in discussing these final plays, terms it a 'birth of Spring o' the wood . . . a simple spiritual rebirth' : the Archbishop of Canterbury orders a religious revival.

III.

Mr. Murry is in very mixed company, since, it would seem, it is for this 'simple spiritual rebirth' that all the more aware sensibilities of our time watch so hungrily and, often, so profitably. However, contemporary works seem very limited, and essentially so, when compared with the play of Shakespeare. If the work of Lawrence, for example, be examined, particularly *The Ship of Death* (which few would be concerned to defend ; it seems but a naïve guidebook account of rebirth) one remarks that a limiting line can be drawn round the experience worked into, recreated in, the verse, and the whole of this experience area is included, and thereby 'placed,' in the amazing complexity of feelings and attitudes which is the play. The relevant comparison lies in the struggle to 're-establish a vital connection between the individual and the race' ; the process of 'withering into life' in the individual is closely related to the corresponding process in the state, the composite unity of individual members.

As we have seen, this relation fuses in the person of Mamilius, but there is never any crude differentiation between the individual and the state ; the process in Leontes *is* the process in his kingdom,

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and Mamilius and, later, the lovers *are* Leontes. In one direction this involves questions of loyalty, a quality which is made a determinant factor in the play. As in *Macbeth*, to which this play has many points of similarity, there is a recognition of the mystic qualities of the crown, and disloyalty thus involves wider problems than mere treason. At the lowest level, Leontes, asserting his ' natural goodness ' and infallibility, charges his courtiers on their allegiance ; Polixenes escapes through the conflict in Camillo of the simple allegiance to his king and the fear of striking ' annointed kings.' But beyond this there is the more perplexing problem of the ' wrong ' of Leontes, for this is envisaged as treason against the state. His act endangers the state through ' fail of issue ' and so the king must be ' in rebellion 'gainst himself.' This wider problem is mirrored in the more personal questions of loyalty of Paulina, Antigonus, Florizel, Perdita and the Shepherd, which all have connections with the idea of the ' holy grace ' of the king. Thus the larger rhythm of the play is crystallized in the tale of Leontes, ' the sad tale . . . best for winter . . . one of Sprites and Goblins ' beginning, ' A man dwelt by a churchyard . . . ' (Almost immediately Leontes enters).

The significance of this tale begun by Mamilius is stressed by the frequent reference to the pregnancy of the queen, and this association with ideas of vegetation myths and rites is reinforced by a continual secondary reference throughout the play. To one living in a vital agricultural community the association between the idea of a divine king and the rhythm of the seasons, which is indeed the larger rhythm of this play, is natural. The play opens just before winter,

> The year growing ancient
> Not yet on Summer's death, nor on the birth
> Of trembling Winter,

and passes through it to the spring festivities of the shepherds. Perdita and Florizel are almost vegetation deities (Mamilius, whose place they take, died at the beginning of Winter) and are ' welcome as the Spring to the earth.' Perdita closely associates each main character she meets with particular flowers and so with particular seasons. This seasonal pattern subsists through the ' wide gap of time.'

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Within this pattern a more subtle rhythm, one which reflects the alternations in the individual and so in the state, is created in the texture of the verse, lying deeper than the more explicit references which have been noted. A detailed scene-by-scene analysis would be necessary to give this its full value ; a few examples indicate the varying movement.

In the first scene the essential goodness of the protagonists is stressed ; feasting, growing trees and loving embassies are mentioned, besides the ' unspeakable comfort of young Mamilius,' but the extravagant protestations of Archidamus, and the promise of ' sleepy drinks ' to lull the intelligence, hint at a basic uneasiness. There is a strong tone of irony. In the next scene the change occurs: at first the imagery is of growth and fertility (' shepherd's note . . . standing in rich place . . . twinned lambs ') but, with the realization of the temporary nature of their ' state of innocence,' there is a change in the direction of the feeling. This is hinted at in the speeches of Hermione, where such expressions as

> . . . cram's with praise, and make's
> As fat as tame things,

have a suggestion of unpleasantness, while the ' Grace ' of her speeches becomes, in the twisted mind of Leontes, ' paddling palms and pinching fingers.' After this, disease predominates in the imagery and the texture of the verse is more corrugated. The nature of the imagery is, naturally, that indicated by our previous examination of the verse of Leontes' speeches.

> (' Many thousands on's have the disease . . . purblind . . . diseased opinion . . . hoxes honesty behind . . . blind with the pin and web . . . a savour that may strike the dullest nostril . . . the great'st infection that was heard or read . . . my best blood turn to an infected jelly . . . distemper . . . a sense as cold as is a dead man's nose ').

The common characteristic is the naked exposure of the nerves to pain, or, less intense, in the common disgust reactions to dead things. Things unnatural occur and natural forces are dissipated

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or destroyed, as for example sleep is destroyed, and, as in *Macbeth*, is full of dreams.

> Nor night nor day no rest.

Leontes recognizes the distinction:

> The purity and whiteness of my sheets
> Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted
> Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps.

The 'sleepy drinks' of the first scene take on a more sinister meaning:

> . . . might'st bespice a cup,
> To give mine an enemy a lasting wink;
> Which draught to me were cordial.

Here again one notes how the whole action depends on the fundamental ambiguity inherent in the problem of reality: Leontes' cup has a spider; if he does not see it, the cup is still healthful; if he sees it, 'he cracks his gorge, his sides, with violent hefts.'

> I have drunk and seen the spider.

The unnaturalness is part of a vast incredibility, of a terrifying nightmare of horrible spiders, which is taken to the verge of a macabre farce. Only the pure innocence of a Hermione sees these things in the proper perspective, in which violent death is but a bug used by a nasty little boy to frighten little girls. (Paulina speaks of Leontes' thoughts as

> Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle
> For girls of nine,

and always adopts a superior attitude towards him, despite his 'grey beard'). There is the same lack of reasonableness as in the fears of a child in this convulsive sensationalism, which shows up in sharp contrast to the dignified Grace of Hermione. The farcical tone at times crystallizes into a brutal coarseness, and it is this which characterizes the court and trial scenes. Antigonus threatens to 'geld' his daughters and 'keep his stables where he lodges his wife' and 'go in couples with her.' Hermione is called a 'hobbyhorse' among other things. Coarseness of the moral fibre

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is coexistent with the extreme exposure to sensation of Leontes, that 'pinched thing.' There is yet another element to be noted. The ironic tone related to this air of farce was seen to be closely linked to a frequent shift in perspective. For instance, in the Tale-telling scene the fact that the tale is that of the play itself, the tale for Winter, gives a sense of double time, of the action taking place within itself, and this results in a certain distancing of the emotions. At various times the characters seem to see themselves acting. The most obvious examples are in this part of the play where all is fantasy. Leontes' speech

> You, my lords,
> Look on her well . . . (Act II Scene I 1164 to 78)

is a set speech employing the very phrases of the actor ('O I am out'). It is as if the feelings of pain and disgust which convert the pleasant wantonry of the court ladies into vile sexuality are too acute to be faced. Later the shrinking from reality is superbly realized in the verse.

Among these melodramatic 'wheels, racks, fires, flayings, boilings, in lead or oils' one encounters an increase in the images of purgation. There was one in the first scene; perhaps it is accidental that the number of such images increases, though I do not think so. Paulina appoints herself the physician of the king. The deaths of his son and wife are 'purges' for the king and there is a sudden, daring modulation in the feeling. The crude coarseness and spasmodic movement give way to a calm resignation. The difference may be seen in comparing the verse of the Jealousy Speeches with that of the repentant ones. Whereas the former were jerky, broken, and excessively elliptical, the later verse is smooth, the curves are more regular and longer, not as in the speeches of Camillo, but as if deflated. Leontes declares

> Once a day I'll visit
> The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
> Shall be my recreation.

In the words of Lawrence, he finds 'an exit from the fallen self.'[1] Immediately after his resolve, in a scene of great subtlety and

[1] *The Ship of Death.*

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beauty, ' all the instruments that aided to expose the child were even then lost when it was found.' But there is no possibility of a simple attitude of sympathy or rejection towards the ' fate ' of Antigonus and his crew, because in the first place an almost comic suggestion prevents pathos, and, beyond that, the emphasis is placed on the storm itself and the subsequent emergence of the new life. Any attempt to ' justify ' the death of Antigonus as a person becomes ludicrous when one considers the tone of his last speech, a piece of rhetoric in the style of the lesser dramatists, and

> Exit, pursued by a bear.

After the terrible insistence on the exposure of the nervous system to pain in the court scenes, one accepts with relief the attitude of the Clown to the ' bear, half dined on the gentleman ' and the drowning sailors.

> But to make an end of the ship, to see how the sea flap-dragoned it: but first how the poor souls roared and the sea mocked them ; and how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea or the weather.

The storm itself shares in this critical irony, for it is never quite so straightforward a symbol as when it occurs in the other late plays.

> Now the ship boring the moon with her mainmast, and anon swallowed with yest and froth, as you'ld thrust a cork into a hogshead.

Everything is brought down to the level of everyday life, though without destroying the sense of wonder which is implicit in such words as ' thou mettest with things dying, I with things newborn,' and the repeated references to fairies and changelings.

The storm scene effects the complete change in feeling attendant on the transition from the court to the country, obviating any crude distinction between the two modes, and making possible the essential critical interaction noted in our analysis of them. Against the disease and stress of Sicilia the growth and fertility of Bohemia stand out in sharp contrast, yet even here the Leontes theme is recapitulated, for Florizel, like Leontes who had been

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'a feather for each wind that blows,' trusts to his instincts and abjures Reason:

> We profess ourselves to be the slaves of chance
> And flies of every wind that blows.

Perdita takes the place of the dead Mamilius, and, guided by Camillo, they take a course

> more promising
> Than a wild dedication of themselves
> To unpathed waters, undreamed shores,

and voluntarily extinguish all marks of personality.

Up to this point the imagery had been of the Spring-and-goodness order with an impressive list of sweet, tasty things (sugar, currants, dates, prunes, raisins o' the sun, rice, saffron to colour the warden pies, mace, nutmeg, ginger, and wines). Now the tone changes again as the action centres once more in Leontes, and death, ghosts, corpses (with a subdued ironic tone) are frequently mentioned, with less frequent occurrences of words such as 'grace' and 'holy' and 'saint,' and the general impression is one of resigned deathliness with a nascent spirit of revolt, of which the type image might be

> Stars, stars,
> And all eyes else dead coals.

Dead coals are not actively repulsive, have none of the positive force of 'tails of wasps,' but have a dull neutral effect which contrasts with the eternal brightness of the stars. Yet still the air of melodrama of the previous court scenes persists, for Paulina adopts the attitude of the Fat Boy until silenced by Leontes.

After this, slow tempo is abandoned and a rapid acceleration ensues, with the focus shifting quickly from character to character and the news 'nothing but bonfires' and everyone amazed and incredulous of this 'old tale.' This movement is enacted again in the last scene, for this starts slow and gradually works up from the slow evenness of the first speeches to the excitement of the reanimation. Long, weighted enjambements give way to more broken speech and then again give way to the dignified movement of the speeches of Hermione and Leontes. The last speech, when

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contrasted with the Jealousy Speeches, is the measure of the change effected in this ' dying into life.' It has the graceful dignity of a pavane by Dowland, as befits, one points out, such a ' procession off.'

The rhythm is then complete and the Waste Land is made fertile once more. Bohemia and Sicilia are reconciled and the old shepherd stands by ' like a weatherbitten conduit of many kings' reigns.'

IV.

The first impression of sober restraint, then, has to be qualified by a recognition of the ' savage humour ' underlying much of the play. It would be absurd to suggest that this play could be fitted into a definite line of development from Marlowe to Ben Jonson, and thence, perhaps, to Dickens, for although, as has been suggested, much in this play does relate to such a line, the nature of this relation must rather be determined in reference to the common sixteenth century background. In any case it is peculiarly difficult to fit a play of Shakespeare into any particular scheme with any profit. Starting from a consideration of the attitudes of people living in a predominantly agricultural community such as that of Elizabethan England, one realizes that a major dramatist within that tradition would inevitably share and transmute such attitudes in degrees proportionate to his quality. Explanation of such attitudes might proceed from a discussion in terms of the inevitability of the seasonal cycle, and the helpless dependence of the individual on forces which are beyond his control, and, often, envisaged as cruel. Conservatism and distrust of all excess, which in one direction find expression in ' savage humour,' are natural and inevitable in such a culture, and indeed can be well documented by reference to contemporary primitive cultures. Bearing this in mind, this play may be considered as a remarkable development from the folk drama of England, because it relates the personal problems of the individual to a significant synthesis of the various disparate elements of that culture. But as such it must not be considered, in ways more or less subtle, as a monograph on a particular period or area.

F. C. TINKLER.

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CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

AS historian Mr. Christopher Dawson combines an accurate scholarship with an unusual capacity to synthesize the results of different fields of inquiry. The same qualities are displayed in his pamphleteering. He is the most persuasive of contemporary Catholic apologists ; unlike Mr. Belloc he is not guilty of distortions of fact ; and unlike M. Maritain he does not resort to rhetoric or appeal to the snobbery of those initiated into the Faith. At first sight the doctrines expounded in his pamphlets appear to follow logically from his interpretations of the past, and his interpretations of the past to be firmly grounded in historic fact. There are, nevertheless, certain hiatuses in the chain of reasoning and the object of this review is to indicate where they are to be found.

As with all good historians Mr. Dawson's interests are determined by the contemporary situation. The modern state, now completely secularized, and recognizing no end beyond itself, is claiming control over every part of human life ; the same growth of totalitarianism is exhibited, in different ways, by Communism, by Fascism and by parliamentary democracy. As Mr. Dawson says in *Religion and the Modern State*, ' they are all moving by different but parallel paths to the same goal, which is the mechanization of human life and the complete subordination of the individual to the state and the economic process.' Such a growth has two dangers: the danger that the individual, by losing his sense of responsibility and his respect for non-material ideals, may lose his spiritual vitality ; and the danger that the rival totalitarianisms, in their efforts to destroy each other, may also destroy civilization. Mr. Dawson is interested, therefore, in cultural vitality and unity. He believes that a culture is vitalized and unified by its religious beliefs, and that European culture has owed its vitality, and such unity as it has ever possessed, to the Christian faith ; from which he deduces that a return to Catholicism is the remedy for the threatened decline of the West.

Mr. Dawson's belief ' that every culturally vital society must possess a religion, whether explicit or disguised, and that the

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religion of a society determines to a great extent its cultural form ' is a valuable counteractive to the materialism of nineteenth century historians, and is in harmony with contemporary anthropology, which finds that a culture must be regarded as an organic whole, every element in a cultural pattern interacting and interpenetrating with every other element. In order to show the relationship of this belief with the doctrines of historical materialism, it might be interpreted as follows. Materialism declares that human beings act in order to satisfy their needs. Man, however, is a rational and not an instinctive animal, which means that the intelligence intervenes between the need and its expression in activity. What immediately determines action is not the instinctive need but the need as it is interpreted by the intelligence, and such interpretations normally reflect the religious beliefs or prevalent philosophy of society. An impulse, for example, which in a culture dominated by a materialistic philosophy would be treated as sexual might, in a society oriented around supernatural religion, lead to mystical experience. Freud interprets the love of God as a compensation for sexual impulses which have not been satisfied ; for Dante, on the other hand, the sexual impulse was a desire for beauty which would find its true fulfilment in the love of God. A society, moreover, must not only interpret human needs ; it must also provide standards of value ; it must supply a basis for that collective effort and individual self-sacrifice without which social stability is impossible. Such a basis may be provided, as in the middle ages, by the religious ideal of service to God, or, as to-day, by the secular ideals of national supremacy or collective prosperity. Each culture has its own interpretations of human needs and its own code of values, which depend on its religious and philosophical ideas ; and cultural history consists primarily of the history of the changes in these interpretations and values. Though the dominant ideology of a society has a close relationship with its economic technique and its class system, it is not evident—in spite of Marxist theorizings—that one can be deduced from the other. If economic change may result in the adoption of new standards of value, that progress is itself the result of human activity guided by previous standards of value.

Mr. Dawson's emphasis on the religious factor in cultural history can therefore be justified. But before it is applied to the

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contemporary situation certain qualifications must be made—qualifications which Mr. Dawson himself does not always respect.

In the first place the cultural historian is driven to adopt a Spenglerian relativism, and from this relativism Mr. Dawson does not escape. As a Catholic he believes that Catholic culture is superior to any other, but this is an assumption which he does not, and cannot, prove. If we compare two cultural systems, both of which are foreign to us—Buddhism and Confucianism, for example—it is difficult to see why one should be regarded as truer or more satisfying than the other, or what basis for judgment there can be other than individual and racial temperament. The only possible method of evaluating a culture would be to consider how far it satisfied the needs of human beings, but unfortunately our definition of human needs is itself determined by the culture to which we happen to belong. Mr. Dawson, for example, asserts that human beings have a need for God, and that one of the maladies of modern society is that this need is unable to find its appropriate satisfaction ; in the growing fanaticism of contemporary politics he sees ' a spiritual passion which has lost its theological object.' The weakness of this argument is that the ages which pursued theological objects were no less fanatical than those in which spiritual passions have been directed into secular channels. Between the intolerance of a Nazi and that of a crusader, or between the Ogpu and the Inquisition, there is little to choose. The Marxist, on the other hand, will declare that human needs are wholly material and that a culture which satisfies them is superior to one which does not ; but the assertion that human needs are wholly material is illegitimate. Human beings obviously have *some* material needs ; they need food, clothing and shelter. But they also have other needs—needs for the esteem of their neighbours, for æsthetic pleasure and for service to an impersonal ideal—which may take a material or a non-material form according to the cultural environment, and in all human societies above the most primitive level it is these secondary needs which have the greatest weight in determining behaviour. The same craving for esteem, the same desire to realize an ideal, may cause the Hindu fakir to practise self-mortification, the bourgeois entrepreneur to develop a new industrial enterprise, and the proletarian to endure tortures in a concentration camp. If then we apply Mr. Dawson's

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doctrine to contemporary society, we must agree that there is a need for some kind of unifying religion. One of the cardinal maladies of the modern world is that the old religious beliefs have decayed and nothing has taken their place. Human beings, divided between the old spirituality and the new materialism, are uncertain as what they want and what they ought to respect. But the argument that we should adopt Catholicism because it is the only religion obviously available is hardly likely to inspire us with a true religious fervour, just as the attempts of Augustus to restore the old Roman faith failed to avert the decline of Rome. The argument of availability applies equally well to Communism, a substitute-religion which, whatever its deficiencies, is clearly capable both of unifying European society and of inspiring its followers with enthusiastic devotion and self-sacrifice. Since societies, as Mr. Dawson has occasionally reminded us, can never return to the past, Europe is likely either to continue to decay or to develop some new religious synthesis in harmony with its present ideals and its scientific knowledge.

In the second place, Mr. Dawson's use of the word ' religion ' is ambiguous. A society is unified and vitalized by a system of beliefs. We may conveniently describe such a system as a religion, but it need not be dependent upon a faith in God or in a divine revelation. Chinese civilization achieved stability for two thousand years by a code of ethics. Communism has all the earmarks of a religion, yet it denies the existence of God. Mr. Dawson, however, believes that society needs not only a religion but also a supernatural religion. A civilization which loses contact with spiritual forces, he declares, ' is doomed to destruction, not by any external fatality, but by the decay of its own energies and the loss of its social vitality.' ' The more secular a society becomes, the lower becomes its vitality.' In primitive times, he points out, the influence of supernatural religion was all-pervading and was regarded as a source of vitality. There seems, however, to be no good reason why we should accept as our models the Pueblo Indians or the men of the Old Stone Age. The progress of civilization has always meant a progress in secularization ; fields of inquiry which were originally the prerogative of the priesthood have achieved independence, and ethical ideals have taken the place of religious rituals. This is a process which we can hardly expect to reverse. Society

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needs a code of conduct, and it is improbable that any such code can be created by reason alone ; it must always reflect the general character of a culture, and must therefore appear to the disinterested intelligence as based partly on prejudice. But Mr. Dawson's belief that we must maintain contact with the supernatural is a mysticism so far beyond the boundaries of reason that it can be neither defended nor refuted in rational terms. To the non-Catholic it would appear that a consistent materialism leads to cultural decline not because it denies God but because it denies those spiritual needs which may be satisfied in supernatural religion but which have also, in different cultures, been fulfilled through ethical and æsthetic idealisms.

That European culture, in spite of its political divisions, is essentially a unity, and that its basis is the Christian tradition, are propositions which Mr. Dawson, in his historical works, has expounded convincingly. In *The Age of the Gods* he gave a demonstration of the unity of European culture in primitive times ; and in *The Making of Europe* and in *Mediæval Religion* he showed how the unity of culture through the middle ages was the creation of the Catholic Church, which synthesized the various lines of influence—Hellenic, Roman, Arabic and Germanic. Carrying the argument further—in *Progress and Religion*—he showed that the philosophy of modern secularism developed out of the Christian tradition. The dominating attitudes of European culture since the Renascence have been rationalism, individualism and meliorism ; the European has been characterized by faith in the power of the human reason to understand the universe, by faith in the capacity of the individual to discover truth and to be responsible for his own happiness if he is guaranteed against external interference, and by faith in the possibility of progress. This liberal trinity is a legacy from Christianity. Modern rationalism is derived from the Christian doctrine that the universe is an intelligible whole, created by an intelligent deity ; modern individualism from the Christian belief in the value of the individual soul ; modern meliorism from the Christian interpretation of history as a process characterized not by cyclic recurrence but by the gradual regeneration of humanity through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Progress and Religion* is a book which nobody who is concerned with the future of modern culture can afford to ignore. A knowledge

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of Christian theology, such as Mr. Dawson possesses, should indeed be regarded as indispensable for an understanding of modern society, since one cannot otherwise appreciate those dominating ideas which Christianity bequeathed to contemporary liberalism and which—to those who do not understand their origin—are apt to appear as self-evident and axiomatic. Separated from their roots in Christian philosophy, these principles—Mr. Dawson argues—lose their meaning and vitality. If the universe is merely a product of mechanical or dialectical forces and is not animated by any spiritual principle, then there is no reason for supposing that the human mind can understand it—which leads to pragmatism—or that the individual should be regarded as endowed with rights—which leads to an ethics of power—or that progress can be anything but an illusion—which leads to the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Modern society, in other words, is living parasitically on the religious traditions of its past. Insofar as it has adopted materialism, it has destroyed its own moral foundations ; it cannot achieve any unity other than that imposed by force or any ethical basis except individual self-interest.

Mr. Dawson deduces from this analysis that the liberal ideals can be preserved only by a return to Catholicism and implies that the present crisis in Western culture is the result of our abandonment of Catholicism. The argument seems, at first sight, to be convincing, but when Mr. Dawson begins to make practical deductions from it—as he does in *Religion and the Modern State*—he arrives at conclusions which contradict his premises ; of the various forms of totalitarianism he prefers Fascism, in spite of the fact that Fascism is the enemy of rationalism, crushes individual freedom, and scoffs at the ideal of progress. This paradoxical conclusion is due, in the first place, to the fact that Mr. Dawson identifies Christianity with Catholicism and Catholicism with the organized Catholic Church, and makes the preservation of the Church his political standard of reference. Such a chain of argument contains two non-sequiturs. Christianity and Catholicism are not identical. Historic Christianity is a blend of two contradictory traditions ; it has inherited from the Greeks a humanistic faith that every aspect of human nature and of the material world is potentially good, and from the mystery cults an attitude of pessimistic renunciation of the world and the flesh. These two

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traditions have different practical consequences ; according to the first, for example, economic progress, though not the highest good, is good in its place ; according to the second it may actually interfere with the achievement of sanctity. Modern liberalism is derived from the first of these traditions, the Catholic Church has on the whole placed more emphasis on the second. Mr. Dawson, by inviting us to preserve our liberal ideals by returning to the Catholic Church, is therefore in reality inviting us to abandon them. Catholicism, moreover, is not identical with the Catholic Church. Catholicism is a body of beliefs and ideals ; the Catholic Church is a human institution with its own vested interests to defend. From Catholicism can be deduced a liberal and intelligent social programme, such as that set forth in the papal encyclicals ; but the Catholic Church has made little effort to translate that programme into practice, and has often been led by its property interests to ally itself with other privileged and reactionary groups.

The political consequences of Mr. Dawson's adherence to the Catholic Church are set forth in *Religion and the Modern State*. Mr. Dawson condemns all the varieties of totalitarianism as secular and irreligious. He then inquires which of them is most friendly to organized religion. The inevitable conclusion is that Communism is the Kingdom of Antichrist, the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Communist Party being ' the vital issue of our time,' whereas Fascism is not ' consciously or intentionally hostile to religion.' The Catholic cannot wholly approve of Fascism, but we are to assume, apparently, that it is less objectionable than the other forms of totalitarianism. Having arrived at this conclusion, Mr. Dawson attempts to strengthen it by insisting that Fascism is a much nobler affair than most intellectuals have supposed. Quoting from the vague and superficial little book which Mr. Paul Einzig wrote in praise of Mussolini, he maintains that Fascism is ' a real thing,' that its aims are almost identical with those of Socialism, and that the corporate state, which he takes more seriously than most of those who have observed it in operation, comes close to being a realization of the papal encyclicals. We may agree that Fascism cannot be explained as merely an instrument of finance capitalism ; it is a political, not an economic, phenomenon. But it is none the less a phenomenon of decay. Its essence is to be found not in its economic programme,

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which scarcely differs from that adopted by the parliamentary democracies of England, France and the United States, but in the fact that a group of condottieri make use of social bewilderment and of the fear of civil war to seize power and to hold it by crushing every possible form of opposition. Since the primary purpose of its leaders is presumably not to defend the capitalist system but to maintain themselves in power, it may conceivably develop into a form of military socialism ; but the horror with which intellectuals have generally regarded it will continue to be justified. Whether capitalist or socialist, it means the enthronement of brute force and the destruction of rationality.

There are, however, deeper and more significant reasons for rejecting Mr. Dawson's approach to contemporary problems, and for accepting only with the greatest caution his statement that ' the political problems of the modern world are in the last resort religious.' It is necessary to distinguish carefully between the different levels of cultural change. It is true, as Mr. Dawson believes, that ethical values depend on philosophical principles, and practical activity on ethical values, but the connection is often remote and—except to the philosopher—of little immediate importance. An intelligent practical activity may be associated with a wrong philosophy, or with no consciously held philosophy at all ; such contradictions, which disturb those who are professionally interested in metaphysical problems, are not noticed by the politician. The philosophy of Communism, for example, is a naïve and self-contradictory mixture of nineteenth-century determinism with Christian eschatology, and its ethical values, consistently applied, will tend to encourage a dreary materialism. Nevertheless in their approach to immediate practical problems Communists may be more nearly right than those who profess a more humane philosophy. On the other hand a good philosophy, wrongly applied, may actually impede political progress. It is, for example, true that the multiplication of bathtubs is not the purpose of civilization and that a great work of art is more important than all the bathtubs in existence ; but if we insist too strongly on this fact, we shall find ourselves playing into the hands of those who, possessing bathtubs themselves, wish a pretext for denying them to other people.

Mr. Dawson is concerned primarily with the philosophical

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level. On this level, however, changes are both slow and deep, so that the power of any individual to influence them is small, and problems are never urgent. It may take a century or more for new philosophical attitudes to become sufficiently diffused to have political consequences. If to-day the liberal ideals appear to be losing their power to influence men's minds, it is not at all because there is any general consciousness that they are inconsistent with scientific materialism but for reasons of a practical order ; it is because it is difficult to apply them in a society characterized by large-scale industry. It is therefore unnecessary to insist on the immediate adoption of whatever religion happens to be available, even though it is true that in the long run, if European culture is to survive, it must again accept a religious interpretation of the universe. Such an interpretation will presumably be, in essentials, Christian ; Christianity has given European civilization its character ; the European remains a Christian, even though he may not be conscious of it, since one only ceases to be a Christian by becoming something else. But that Europe will return to that form of institutional Christianity which is represented by the Catholic Church seems improbable, unless as a result of pessimism caused by political failure. It is more likely to adopt a philosophy derived from Christianity but shorn of its otherworldly elements.

Below the philosophical level is the level of ethics, and here we come closer to the problems of contemporary society. The liberal ideals are, in themselves, insufficient as guides to conduct ; when Catholicism was displaced by secular idealism, something of vital importance was omitted. Liberalism has not provided mankind with positive standards of value, and has in consequence too often resulted in a crude materialism. The ideal of progress has become associated with a mere increase in economic efficiency, the ideal of individualism with the competitive struggle for wealth. It is arguable, moreover, that the liberal ideals, even when associated with religious values, require limitations. If Europeans had less faith in their capacity to discover truth, they might be less intolerant ; if they had a less acute sense of their own individualities, they might achieve a greater social stability ; if they were less intent on creating a better future, they might be more capable of appreciating the present , if in general Europe were more like China, they might be happier. On this level also, however, changes

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are relatively slow. The spirit of modern society needs, as Mr. Dawson insists, to be changed; but if, as he also insists, we concentrate on changing the spirit and leave the machinery to take care of itself, we shall find ourselves overtaken by disaster.

It is only on the level of practical activity that problems are urgent. On this level, however, the range of possibilities is proportionately smaller. On any immediate and concrete question there are often only two courses to adopt, and to reject one of them on the ground that its most prominent advocates hold wrong philosophical principles is to reduce oneself to futility. The art of politics is the art of compromise; to be politically effective is to be capable of combining conflicting interests and opinions in order that they may agree on a common and limited programme. At the present day, for example, the extension of state control is inevitable, unless we are to relapse into chaos, and even those who disapprove of it on principle and hope that in the future the process may be reversed must temporally resign themselves to it. What remains doubtful is whether the control should be exercised in order to increase the power of a few or in order to promote the welfare of the majority. Mr. Dawson believes that there are not two alternatives in contemporary politics but three; in addition to capitalism and socialism there is also Catholicism, which is equally antagonistic to both of them. But in practice the Catholic normally has the choice of supporting the capitalist against the socialist, or of supporting the socialist against the capitalist. Mr. Dawson appears to favour the first alternative; if he were more cautious about translating philosophical differences into terms of practical activity, he would choose the second. For from the standpoint of Christian philosophy, and not of the interests of an organized Church, Communism is a Christian heresy, which bears a resemblance to, and—through Hegel and German mysticism—can trace its descent from, the Montanists and the Brethren of the Free Spirit and the Anabaptists. It is Fascism, with its amoral worship of power, with its affinities to that Roman Empire which for the early Christians was the realm of the beast, or to that Germanic barbarism which was slowly tamed by the missionaries of the Dark Ages, which is the true Kingdom of Anti-christ. Undoubtedly the philosophical differences between the Marxists and those who remain faithful to a more orthodox

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tradition must, in course of time, lead to practical divergencies. But practical problems are settled as they arise, and the philosopher must accept not what he wants but what he can get. Immediate exigencies require that the economic system be controlled by the state, and that this control be exercised in the interests of the majority of the people. It will also, in course of time, become necessary to defend the liberty of the individual against a totalitarian state, and to prevent human life from becoming subordinated to the processes of the economic machine ; and the diffusion of a wise and humane philosophy will make these problems easier of solution. But it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the possibilities of the present and those of the future. The immediate evil is not the tyranny of the state but economic chaos, not the subordination of the worker to the economic machine but the denial to the worker of the wealth which the machine produces.

H. B. PARKES.

LITERARY CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHY

[The following was addressed to the author of *Revaluation : Tradition and Development in English Poetry*. Since this book has not been reviewed in *Scrutiny* and since Dr. Wellek's criticisms raise important issues that are of general interest, the Editors have decided, with his permission, to print them. F. R. Leavis will reply in *Scrutiny* for June].

I HAVE read your new book *Revaluation* with much admiration and profit. It seems the first consistent attempt to rewrite the history of English poetry from the twentieth century point of view. Spenser, Milton, Shelley, Tennyson, the pre-Raphaelites, the

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Georgians recede into the background, and Donne, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth and Keats in part, Hopkins, the later Yeats, T. S. Eliot, etc., move into the foreground. Your book teems with acute critical observations and brilliant interpretations of texts. I think there will be little quarrel with your chapters on the seventeenth century, on Pope, on the eighteenth century and on Keats. If I may venture, however, some fundamental criticisms (and there would be no reason to write unless I had something to say), I could wish that you had stated your assumptions more explicitly and defended them systematically. I do not doubt the value of these assumptions and as a matter of fact I share them with you for the most part, but I would have misgivings in pronouncing them without elaborating a specific defence or a theory in their defence. Allow me to sketch your ideal of poetry, your ' norm ' with which you measure every poet: your poetry must be in serious relation to actuality, it must have a firm grasp of the actual, of the object, it must be in relation to life, it must not be cut off from direct vulgar living, it should be normally human, testify to spiritual health and sanity, it should not be personal in the sense of indulging in personal dreams and fantasies, there should be no emotion for its own sake in it, no afflatus, no mere generous emotionality, no luxury in pain or joy, but also no sensuous poverty, but a sharp, concrete realization, a sensuous particularity. The language of your poetry must not be cut off from speech, should not flatter the singing voice, should not be merely mellifluous, should not give *e.g.* a mere general sense of motion, etc. You will recognize, of course, in this description tags from your book chosen from all chapters, and the only question I would ask you is to defend this position more abstractly and to become conscious that large ethical, philosophical and, of course, ultimately, also æsthetic *choices* are involved.

My further criticism would be directed to one of the consequences of your assumptions. Your insistence on a firm grasp on the actual presupposes you in the direction of a realist philosophy and makes you unappreciative of a whole phase of human thought: idealism as it comes down from Plato. This makes you underrate the coherence and even the comprehensibility of the romantic view of the world. I would like to demonstrate this by an analysis of a few examples from your chapters on the Romanticists.

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You compare, *e.g.*, the structure of Blake's ' Introduction to the Songs of Experience ' with Eliot's ' Ash Wednesday,' and consider Blake's poem as so ambiguous as to have no ' right sense ' at all (p. 141). Actually, I think, the poem has only one possible meaning which can be ascertained by a study of the whole of Blake's symbolical philosophy. Here is my paraphrase: the poet is addressing Mankind, Fallen Man, who in Blake is frequently enough symbolized by the Earth. Man! he says, listen to the voice of the poet who has the gift of prophecy because he has listened to the voice of God. In spite of his fall Man might yet control the universe (' the starry pole '). Arise from your slumber. Morning is near. But in the meantime you can wait armed with Reason, limited by Time and Space. Or to comment on every difficulty in detail: not the Holy Word of the *Bard* is calling the lapsed soul as you say (p. 141). The Bard claims only to have heard the voice of God who once (in the garden of Eden) called the lapsed soul who then was weeping in the evening dew. Delete ' and ' (in line 7) which was inserted only because of the rhythm and the sense is quite clear. The word ' dew,' by the way, has a special significance in Blake, and if you compare the very similar scene in ' Vala ' (Ninth Night l. 371, etc.) you find there phrases like ' the dew of death,' which are obviously relevant. ' The dewy grass ' in line 12 of our poem is also symbolic. ' Dew ' or any water in Blake represents matter, the grass for obvious reasons flesh. The next ' that ' cannot possibly refer to God, but to the soul or to Man, who after his rebirth might control the ' starry pole.' There is no need to evoke ' Lucifer.' Earth, identical with Man and soul, should arise out of matter (' dewy grass ' is the same as ' slumberous mass '). The twinkling stars in Blake mean always the light of Reason and the watery shore the limit of matter or of Time and Space. The identification of Earth and Man in this poem is explicitly recognized by Blake in the illustration to this very poem which represents a masculine figure lying upon the ' watery shore ' and with the ' starry floor ' as a background painfully lifting his head. There may be discussion how hard this or that symbol of Blake should be pressed, but the structure seems to me in no way to resemble ' Ash Wednesday,' and the syntax is quite clear. One of the difficulties is the punctuation in your version: in the first edition there is no semi-colon after ' sees,' no

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comma after ' Soul,' a colon after ' dew,' commas after ' heard ' and ' Word,' etc.[1]

The chapter on Wordsworth, excellent as it is in fine critical discrimination, shows the same lack of interest in romantic philosophy. I cannot see why the argument of Canto II of the ' Prelude ' could not be paraphrased, and I cannot possibly consider Mr. Empson's analysis of a passage from ' Tintern Abbey ' as satisfactory.[2] There is no difficulty with this passage except possibly in the words ' something far more deeply interfused.' The question ' than what?' put by Mr. Empson can be answered only by ' than you would think, than it is usually, *i.e.* in theism understood.' A ' presence,' a ' sense sublime,' a ' motion and a spirit ' are all different terms for the something ' impelling all thinking things, all objects of all thought.' This last phrase does not, as Mr. Empson suggests, imply ' determinism ' or even ' pre-destination,' but means simply that this something, this spirit sets in motion both human minds and all objects of these minds. The sense of the passage becomes quite clear if we see in the light of the whole of Wordsworth's philosophy, *e.g.*, if we read of ' the one interior life that lives in all things . . . in which all beings live with God, themselves are God, existing in the mighty whole ' (from a Note-book of only slightly later date, Selincourt's edition of the Prelude, p. 512). I grant that we to-day may not be impressed by these speculations, but they are the very life-blood of a great European tradition descended from Plato, and they are still considered valid and valuable by many prominent thinkers. I recall, *e.g.*, A. N. Whitehead's interesting comments on Wordsworth's philosophy of nature (*Science and the Modern World*, 1926, p. 103) where the

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[1]This explanation of the poem is necessary also in view of A. E. Housman's remarks on the poem in the ' Name and Nature of Poetry ' (1933). Housman perceives ' little meaning ' in it and speaks of its ' mysterious grandeur ' (41). Though Richards (in *Coleridge on Imagination*, 210-11) rejects Housman's comment he gives no explanation.

[2]Mr. Empson, who says many good things on ' wit,' ' conceit,' etc., and knows how to analyse Shakespeare's Sonnets or Donne, goes completely astray on Wordsworth. See *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930, p. 191 ff.

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eminent mathematician, logician and speculative philosopher commends Wordsworth precisely because ' he grasps the whole nature in the tonality of the particular instance.' Whitehead quotes ' Ye Presences of Nature in the sky ' (from Prelude I, lines 464) as expressing most clearly a feeling for nature, ' exhibiting entwined prehensive unities, each suffused with modal presences of others.' Bradley's comparison with Hegel does not seem to me absurd and I have myself shown (in my book on *Kant in England*, 1931, p. 159 ff.) that traces of Kantian thought can be found in Wordsworth (indirectly through Coleridge). The debt to Hartley to which you refer and which you consider rightly as external (p. 158) was really much slighter and more transient than it would appear from a book like Beatty's.[1] So contrary to your own conclusion (p. 164) I would maintain the coherence, unity, and subtlety of Wordsworth's thought. I would be chary about using the term ultimate validity, but Wordsworth's thoughts on nature, etc., seem to me equally satisfying (and actually of the very same general tendency) as the thought of Schelling or Hegel on these questions. This stress on the ' defensibility ' (is there such a word in the English language?) of Wordsworth's philosophy of nature implies that Wordsworth's thought is not reducible to the Arnoldian conception or to Mr. Empson's astonishing assertion that he has no ' other inspiration than the mountains as a totem or a father-substitute ' (*loc. cit.* p. 26). Arnold notoriously ignored the poetical thought of Wordsworth, and his anthology of Wordsworth is worth looking at as it shows how exclusively he stressed the pastoral and idyllic side in Wordsworth. Mr. Empson has possibly traced part of Wordsworth's conception to its psychological source in childhood experiences, but it is an ordinary ' fallacy of origins ' to dispose of the actual contents and value of thought by reducing it to individual experience. Whatever the value of Wordsworth's conception of Nature, it seems to me essential to his ideas on human sanity and spiritual health which you state so admirably. ' Nature ' is part of his whole view of the world and cannot be artificially isolated.

The same criticism applies, I think, also to your paper on

[1]Hartley is an empiricist and determinist ; two fundamental concepts opposed to Wordsworth's philosophy after 1798.

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Shelley. I have, first, some doubts on individual points. Your analysis of the second stanza of the 'Ode to the West Wind' presses, I think, some of the metaphors too hard. The comparison of loose clouds with earth's decaying leaves does not seem to me merely vague and general (p. 205). A defence could suggest that the parallel can be made plausible by imagining Shelley lying in his boat and seeing in the loose clouds the counterpart of the leaves swimming in the stream or even seeing clouds mirrored in the water together with the leaves. These are the 'tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,' which I don't think could have been suggested merely by leaves, but rather allude to the old mystical conception of the two trees of Heaven and Earth intertwining.

Your objections against Shelley's stress on inspiration seem to me exaggerated. One cannot deny the share of the unconscious in the creative process and sudden 'inspiration' must be of necessity more prominent in a writer of songs compared to a dramatist, a novelist or a composer of symphonies where the share of conscious work must be larger. Shelley, I think, overstressed the 'inspiration' in obvious reaction to eighteenth century ideas on composing poetry and in answer to Peacock's essay which is written from a completely rationalist point of view. Shelley himself revised his work continuously and one can find at least two or three earlier stages of the 'Ode' in his Note-books (ed. Buxton Forman 1911, Vol. I, 164).[1] *e.g.* the line five was originally 'On the blue deep of the aerial stream,' then 'blue deep' was changed to 'blue depth' and then to 'blue surface.' 'Stream' was replaced by 'billows' before the 'surge' to which you object was adopted.

I cannot see the slightest confusion in the opening paragraph of 'Mont Blanc.' It states an epistemological proposition quite clearly. 'There is nothing outside the mind of man, the receptive function of the stream of consciousness is very much larger than the tiny active principle in mind which itself is determined by the huge flood of external impressions.' So or similarly could one state the contents in abstract terms which in Shelley are expressed in two similes: first the external impressions are compared to a huge stream ever varied into which at a secret point the active

[1]The Note-book you quote (p. 207) does not contain drafts for the criticized stanza.

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principle flows and then this active principle is compared to a feeble brook among high mountains which has seemingly a much louder voice because of the intermingling and surrounding sounds of waterfalls, winds and woods. I cannot see that the 'metaphorical and the actual,' 'the real and the imagined' are confused, as you say (p. 212) and the 'inner' and 'outer' are confused only in the sense that according to Shelley (and all subjective idealists) there is simply no 'outer' accessible to our mind. Shelley—in distinction from Fichte, etc.—is of the opinion that the active contribution of our mind is only slight but still existent as can be further shown by verses in the very same poem:

> My own, my human mind, which passively
> Now renders and receives fast influencings,
> Holding an unremitting interchange
> With the clear universe of things around (l. 37).

Here we have again, in spite of the stress on the passivity of the mind, a clear conception of the give and take, of an interchange between the creative and the purely receptive principles of mind, a complete commentary on the passage explained above. The passage you quote (p. 213) in contrast from Wordsworth's 'Prelude' (VI, 631 ff.) has philosophically nothing to do with the introduction of Shelley's 'Mont Blanc.' It merely asserts the romantic conception of a symbolic meaning in the physiognomy of Nature.

I would not like to defend 'When the lamp is shattered' which seems to me poor Shelley in any case. But still I think you make the poem out to be worse than it is. You do not seem to have interpreted rightly the meaning of the question beginning 'O Love' in stanza 3. The poet merely asks Love why she chooses the frailest thing, *i.e.*, the human heart as her cradle, home and bier? Love is born, resides and dies in the heart. This does not seem to be anything unconventional but still it saves the poem from your charge of containing 'banalities about the sad lot of woman' (p. 221), as woman in my interpretation is never mentioned at all. 'The weak one' which is 'singled to endure what is once possessed' is not necessarily of feminine sex at all, but simply the heart for which complete forgetfulness of former happiness would be less painful than the burden of memory. Stanza 4

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addresses Love again and '*its* passions' refer to the passion of the heart.

These notes are made only to support my main point: Shelley's philosophy, I think, is astonishingly unified, and perfectly coherent. After an early stage of eighteenth century materialism he turned to idealism in a subjective version. It is outside the scope of these notes to determine what exactly were the different influences which moulded his thought. Berkeley or Berkeley through Drummond, Plato, the Neo-platonists, the Gnostics, Spinoza, Shaftesbury or the animistic philosophy of nature developed by E. Darwin and H. Davy from Newton are the names which can be found among his wide reading and they are obviously his spiritual ancestry. (*cf. e.g.* the two books by Carl Grabo, *A Newton among Poets*, 1930, and *The Meaning of the Witch of Atlas*, 1936, which contain much material on these questions and interpret many obscure passages in Shelley). Shelley's conception of the world as a phenomenal flux behind which the unreachable absolute ('the white radiance of eternity') is only dimly perceived pervades also his imagery and symbols as the veils, and streams, boats, caverns, the gnostic eagles and serpents. Another consequence of this idealism is one pervading characteristic of his style which psychologists call 'synæthesia,' *i.e.*, the seeing of sounds and hearing of colours which is not a mere idiosyncracy but is based on a widespread psychological type and appears in the poetry of many ages, especially in the Baroque and the Romantic ages. (There is whole series of papers with hundreds of quotations also from English poetry in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift*, Vols. IX and XIV). This fusing of the spheres of the different senses in Shelley is exactly paralleled in his rapid transitions and fusions of the emotions, from pleasure to pain, from sorrow to joy. Shelley would like us similarly to ignore or rather to transcend the boundaries of individuality between persons just as Indian philosophy or Schopenhauer wants us to overcome the curse and burden of the *principium individuationis*. Here is, of course, the place of Shelley's mysticism which belongs organically to the whole view of the world expounded here. The intellectual honesty, consistency and, at the particular time and place, originality of his thought cannot, I think, be reasonably doubted. I am not sure whether this intellectual system in Shelley's poetry says anything in favour of its value as poetry

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but I think it should meet a good deal of the criticism against him which seems to me to exaggerate the ' confusion ' of his style because it underrates the thought implied. I do not think that psychological considerations on the make-up of the personality of the poet can contribute anything to his defence. Mr. Herbert Read seems to have achieved the opposite of what he wanted when he stressed the pathological features in Shelley's character. Still I think you condemn too rashly as signs of ' viciousness ' and ' corruption ' Shelley's marked interest in details of decay and death (p. 216). The ' sinister ' elements are in Shelley, it is true, sometimes expressed in the language of sensational romanticism (graveyard poetry and Gothic romance) but the interest itself which you may call morbid is so very widespread throughout the history of humanity and even so marked in much great poetry (Donne, Baudelaire, etc.) that it seems to me nothing peculiarly damaging for Shelley can be made out of it.

All these remarks could have only one purpose: to show that the romantic view of the world, though it found in England only one prominent philosopher in Coleridge, underlies and pervades the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, elucidates many apparent difficulties and is, at least, a debatable view of the world. Your book, or rather the very limited part I have been discussing, raises anew the question of the poet's ' belief ' and, how far, sympathy with this belief and comprehension for it is necessary for an appreciation of the poetry. A question which has been debated a good deal, as you know, and which I would not like to solve too hastily on the basis of your book.

René WELLEK.

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DELIUS AND PETER WARLOCK[1]

A Comparative Note

> Yet surely there are men who have made their art
> Out of no tragic war ; lovers of life,
> Impulsive men, that look for happiness,
> And sing when they have found it.
>
> No, not sing,
> For those who love the world serve it in action,
> Grow rich, popular, and full of influence ;
> And should they paint or write still is it action,
> The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
> The rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,
> The sentimentalist himself ; while art
> Is but a vision of reality.
> What portion in the world can the artist have,
> Who has awakened from the common dream,
> But dissipation and despair?
>
> W. B. Yeats, *Ego Dominus Tuus*.

IT is not the purpose of this note to attempt an appraisement of Delius's music or to try to supplement, or to adjudicate between, the fairly complete accounts already given by Philip Heseltine, Cecil Gray, and Constant Lambert. Heseltine's book will be already familiar to anyone interested in modern music, and its excessively laudatory tone was, before his death, deplored by the author ; Mr. Lambert's fragmentary remarks, on the other hand, seem to be unduly disparaging, or at any rate to offer an account which errs on the side of oversimplicity. What I want to do here is to suggest an attitude to the music of Delius, to point to its peculiarly representative quality by relating it to the music of Peter Warlock. For any such discussion Mr. Eric Fenby's *Delius As I Knew Him* is an invaluable book since it provides a sincere and first-hand account of the life Delius lived, the way he worked,

[1] *Delius As I Knew Him*, by Eric Fenby, Bell 8/6.

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the people he knew.

In comparing the serenity of Delius with that of van Dieren, in the last number of *Scrutiny*, I suggested that Delius's uncompromisingly homophonic conception of harmony, ' while it was a personal idiom the condition of his strength, was also responsible for the curious lack of development he manifests.' It is the extremely idiosyncratic nature of Delius's art that gives the clue to his music's inner nature, its representative value. For years at the beginning of his career Delius turned out second-hand, diluted Grieg with hardly a spark of originality and certainly no indication of genius. Then suddenly he produced a work[1] which was like nothing else that had ever been in the history of music, a work showing some uncertainties perhaps, but nevertheless one which was completely original and in which were unmistakably present all the characteristics which make his subsequent music instantly recognizable. ' It was a long, long time before I understood exactly what I wanted to say, and then it came to me all at once ' Mr. Fenby reports him as saying. Perhaps what strikes us as most conspicuous in this queer, personal, idiosyncratic technique is an esoteric quality, an innate refinement, a horror of the mediocre. (' My whole life has been one long struggle against ignorance.'). Delius must surely be an almost unprecedented example of a composer who despised almost all music except his own. ' You needn't ask me to listen to the music of the Immortals,' he said, ' I can't abide 'em. I finished with them long ago.' He could see nothing in plain-song but dull archaism, nothing in Palestrina but mathematics, nothing indeed in any composer whose interest was primarily melodic, and tolerated among the music of his contemporaries only that which was dedicated to him. His only comment on Evlyn Howard-Jones's performance of Beethoven's A flat Sonata Op. 110 was ' Evlyn, why do you waste your time practising this rubbish?' All these stories—and there are many more such recounted by Mr. Fenby—are not merely of a whimsical interest but are intrinsically important because they suggest that Delius's very personal idiom was no accident but was the inevitable outcome of all that he stood for. He was a man who could not ' serve the world in action ' or grow ' rich, popular and full of

[1] *Paris ; the song of a great city* (1899).

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influence' ; he was a man to whom refinement was almost a religion, to whom materialism was distasteful. He was at heart a man of a past age, essentially a romantic ; he had an instinctive love of the beauty of the visible universe, and, in his efforts to preserve that sense of beauty undamaged, he tended to retreat more and more into himself, to despise human beings and the arbitrary systems of behaviour which human beings evolve. Retired into the village of Grez, he tried to recreate in his art, to ' recollect in tranquility,' the beauty that had been lost with his youth.

As he deliberately lost contact with the immediate everyday world around him Delius tended to rely more and more on his own feelings and sensations. It was as though it were only after renouncing the life of action, the struggle of the fly in marmalade, that Delius could begin to realize how, as a young man, he had felt. Life became for him, as Mr. Fenby points out, almost entirely a matter of feeling ; and, from the technical point of view, fine feeling meant, for him, vital harmony. When he used to improvise at the piano Delius would do so without making use of themes of any kind but the chromatic chords would flow and float beneath his fingers in an even progression. He was never known to praise a song for its melody but would always say ' that song shows fine feeling.' And the feeling in his own music was something he was remembering, almost fondling over. His music is the pre-eminent example of a music of nostalgia. It is the music of a man who, with no satisfactory group-life, tries to find some sort of emotional and intellectual validity in his own sensations, particularly in those of his youth. Thus it is at once nostalgic and regressive—regressive to some simpler and thus more immediately satisfactory form of life.

To say that Delius's music is nostalgic and regressive is not, of course, to say very much. What matters is the nature and quality of this nostalgia. In a way, of course, this regressive reliance on the senses establishes connections between Delius and the 'nineties, and it is this implicit presence of the 'nineties which, in turn, provides the link between Delius's chromaticism and that of Debussy and Ravel—Ravel is Wildean, ' witty ' in the nineteenth century salon and sometimes hypersensitive in the manner of Huysmans, whereas Delius and Debussy are pre-Raphaelite and occasionally Dowsonian. But nevertheless, Delius's music is not—

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or at least it is only in a very special sense which we shall come to later—a music of escape because the social plight is implicit in his annotations of personal experience in somewhat the same way as it is implicit in the poetry of Edward Thomas. There is no intellectual adult recognition ; but the terrible sadness and poignancy of Delius's best music comes directly from his being a man of the modern world, even though he may not himself be aware of what that means. His music remains throughout almost entirely sensuous (' Music is an outburst of the soul,' he said, ' it is addressed and should appeal instantly to the soul of the listener.' ' Learning kills instinct '), but just as Mr. Fenby tells us how ridiculously inadequate was the popular account of Delius the man as the picturesque, blind, fragile ' poet,' the saintly soul living in retreat, so behind such varied manifestations of ' sensuousness ' as the ' honeyed intimacies ' of *Appalachia*, the ' sexless impersonal voices ' of *Song of the High Hills*, or the bleakness and bareness of the *North Country Sketches*, there was an immense emotional severity and strength, the severity of his utter unbelief, ' his inhuman aloofness,' his ' all-embracing self-sufficiency,' ' his utter contempt for the crowd.' This severity so characteristic of Delius worked, as we shall see, both ways ; but it is immensely important in his music as a force complementary to the religion of refinement which we have already drawn attention to. It is this severity which makes Delius's cult of refinement so much bigger and more far-reaching a thing than that of Chopin, another composer who created for himself an exotic dialect to express a sensibility completely individual and without precedent ; whose music never developed, was utterly inimitable, and was influenced by no-one. (The relation of Chopin's melodies to the *cantilena* of Bellini is too superficial to be counted an influence ; the ' chastity ' of Bellini is much more noticeable in the nocturnes of John Field, who was *not* a ' forerunner ' of Chopin but a parallel, though quite different, phenomenon). Chopin's refinement is a refinement of pity, very often of self-pity. But Delius said, ' To pity is to be weak. Be yourself, and don't trouble if it hurts anybody else. They'll soon get over it . . . Look to yourself and don't narrow and hedge in your life with conventional behaviour and all these silly moral restrictions that are the stupid invention of priests . . Humanity is incredible. It will believe anything to escape reality.' His

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hatred of orthodox Christianity was almost comic in the naïveté of its fervour. Philip Heseltine described Delius as the sunset of a day of which Wagner had been the high noon. It is illuminating to notice that whereas Wagner chose to graft a ' religious ' element on to his simple, hearty and heroic sensuousness, Delius as resolutely stripped all such elements from *his* sensuousness declaring that ' all artists are best rid of such nonsense.' And although neither of these alternatives seems very satisfactory, the path Delius chose was the right one. Wagner's ' mysticism ' was an artificial product which was harmful to his music ; Delius's irreligion was perfectly genuine and natural to him—it was one of the reasons why his music was ' so and not otherwise.' It may safely be said that Delius never himself *indulged in* his nostalgia ; he was always true to his own *feelings*, though one may suspect that to be true merely to one's feelings—or to what one imagines one's feelings to be in retrospect—is a limited and somewhat dubious sort of ' truth.' That it was so will appear shortly in this discussion.

The technical characteristics of Delius's music, then—the shifting chromatic harmonies, the soaring broken melodies which seem to be born of these harmonies—are, in their extreme individuality, the direct expression of the strength and corresponding limitations of the composer's sensibility. Terrible and beautiful as Delius's best music is, it is limited by those very qualities that make it what it is. There is something oppressive about his almost complete sensuousness, a reliance on the ' feelings ' which makes one assent to, submit to, the music just a little too easily. It is no accident that many people, especially young people, who are otherwise not interested in music at all, are profoundly ' moved ' by Delius because, although his music is so extremely personal, it voices, in its very idiosyncracy, feelings with which we must all, in some moods and to varying degrees, sympathize. It is a little too easy to identify one's own feelings with Delius's music. This sympathy, it must be understood, has nothing to do with any sense of nationality or community. I know that distinguished critics have seen in Delius's music some profoundly English quality (somehow connected with ' worship of Nature ') but I have never been able to understand this. To me, and to almost everyone whose opinion I have asked, there is nothing English about the music

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of Delius, and I am glad to see that Mr. Fenby, whose intimacy with the music of Delius as well as with the man must be greater than that of anybody else now living, bears me out in this explicitly. The immediate sympathy which we sometimes feel with Delius's emotionalism is something that goes beyond considerations of nationality ; we respond because we too regret the passing of this variously defined ' beauty ' that Delius's music represents.

And we have got to admit that this music is something of the past. It must be so, through the very sensuousness and irreligion which is the condition of its existing at all. There is, as Mr. Fenby says, ' no hope in Delius's music. He did not understand contemplation in the Dionysian sense. He sang of the loveliness that is fast passing away before our eyes . . . He had no faith in God, no faith in his fellow-men . . . All through his self-guided life he was blind to what he was doing, blind in the highest sense of the word, directing his untiring energy to the worship of Pure Beauty as an end in itself.' It is this utter absence of anything like ' belief ' that explains why, although in *A Song of the High Hills* there is a contemplative intensity that takes account of tragic issues, a painful vitality that effects one almost as ice burns the fingers, the music leaves one at the end almost entirely without consolation ; and it explains why the *Mass of Life*, although it is in its ' epic grandeur ' one of the greatest and most characteristic works of our time, is nevertheless not ultimately an apotheosis of the Nietzschean stoic virtues but a voluntary renunciation of them. Such a casual remark of Delius as ' Sex plays a tremendous part in life. It is terrible to think that we have come into the world by some despicable physical act,' gives support to the feeling that there is something in Delius's music, despite its power and, at its best, its formal intensity (for only an extremely biased mind could fail to see that Delius's ' form ' is completely adequate to his own unique needs), which it is difficult not to call death-tending. Mr. Cecil Gray has acutely pointed out that it is no mere coincidence that the culmination of all Delius's music, the closing scene of *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, ' should, like that other great swan-song of romanticism, the *Axel* of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, be directly concerned with the act of renunciation of life and self-destruction.' This tendency to seek death as a resting place and a solvent of pain is, of course, another

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manifestation of the regressive nostalgia I have already called attention to. But it is perhaps the most significant manifestation and it reminds us how dangerous a model Delius would be for the young composer, both on account of his excessive sensuousness and death-tendency, and on account of the extreme harmonic idiosyncratic nature of the technique that resulted from these characteristics. ' Here is one of the great despisers ' ; and Delius's ' strength ' can sometimes be only very narrowly distinguished from his hatred of humanity.

Delius has nothing whatever to offer to the composer of the future ; those composers who, like E. J. Moeran, try to follow him succeed only in writing pretty-pretty pastiche[1]—and the last thing one would say about Delius's best and most typical music would be that it was pretty-pretty. The only composer who is supposed to have derived from Delius and who has composed music of any lasting significance is Peter Warlock, and his music is distinguished more by its differences from that of Delius than by its likeness to it. Philip Heseltine was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable personalities of our time ; like Delius, he was over-introspective, melancholy, hypocondriac, no ' lover of life,' but he found a different way out. His way out was the creation of his Mask, his second self—the creation of Peter Warlock. Even in the introspection and gloom of his early youth there were, in his sudden crazy bursts of high spirits and animal exuberance, intimations of what was to come, and that Heseltine was aware of his condition is attested by many passages in his letters:

> ' I have often felt myself to be a mere spectator of the game of life ; this, I know to my sorrow, has led me to a positively morbid self-consciousness and an introspection that almost amounts to insincerity, breeding as it does, detachment from real life. Lately I have tried passionately to plunge into life, and live myself, forgetful if possible of this horrible aloofness.' Letter to Delius, February, 1913.

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[1]Debussy, though some of his tricks are easily assimilated, is an almost equally dangerous composer to imitate. The compositions of Eugene Goossens, who is a conductor of some intelligence and insight, stand as a warning to posterity of the perils of over-immersion in the influence of Debussy.

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From this self-knowledge there emerged, by a deliberate effort, the legendary figure of Peter Warlock, virile, vigorous, diabolic, the Last Elizabethan, the swashbuckling extrovert, the very antithesis of all that Philip Heseltine had stood for ; now disappearing unaccountably to Paris, now living curiously in the village of Eynsford, surrounded by vast quantities of cats and mistresses, now engaged in some fantastic quest for the Ideal Mog, now compiling a treatise on the Decline of English Beer. Now I think Mr. Cecil Gray proves conclusively in the biography—though this is an unsavoury book that I cannot, except for the incidental musical criticism, admire—that Heseltine displayed throughout his life a remarkably powerful personality and an extremely acute intellect. A friend whose opinion I respect had a great admiration, born of some intimacy, for Heseltine personally, and it is pretty certain that he was never self-duped, remained all the time fully conscious of what he was doing ; nor can we refuse the name of genius to so curious an attempt to avoid the consequences to which his horror of ' materialism '—as he repeatedly called it—would have led him. (' This abominable impotence in material things is driving me to despair ' . . . ' the atmosphere of these islands becomes more and more stifling and putrescent to anyone who cares for art . . . Oh what a curse has fallen on the world—and when will it be removed ' ; his admiration for D.H.L. was very deeply founded!). It cannot be said that his effort was, in the long run, a successful one ; the goatee beard did not prevent his life being, in any obvious sense of the word, a failure ; the puns and limericks of the notorious Fantastick of Eynsford did not altogether stall off the attacks of inky hypocondria that drove him to ' dissipation and despair ' and finally led him to turn on the gas. But his effort made it possible for him to create some of the most interesting and living music of our generation ; that, one would think, was sufficient justificfiation.

These significant works, it seems to me, were the creation of Heseltine and Warlock simultaneously. The early music, that of Heseltine alone, is second-hand Delius and for the most part pretty poor stuff—though we begin to sense an original, individual twist given to Delian devices in such a work as *An Old Song* for chamber orchestra. The music of Warlock alone—a few late frothblowing songs—ought never to have been written. All the music that is

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valuable is the music of Heseltine-Warlock. It is intensely nostalgic music, voicing above all the lack of a group-life ; but it does not, like the music of Delius, look backwards to a youth that is done for, but looks straight at the present ; it has a much tougher intellectual quality, it is the result of a conscious facing up to the problem. Thus it is never, like Delius's music, regressive ; it does not rely exclusively on ' feeling.' We are aware of an adult mind behind it, a directing intelligence, and whereas Delius remained all his life ' blind to what he was doing,' Heseltine-Warlock was agonisingly aware and his music became, if narrower in scope, the bitterer for it. The self-knowledge he attained is almost symbolized by his revolt from Delius ; he, who in his early days said that Delius obliterated all other music from his consciousness, ended by declaring—surely too violently—that only *A Village Romeo and Juliet, Sea-Drift,* and *Appalachia,* would live.

It is interesting to note that the appearance of the first compositions of Heseltine-Warlock coincides with the technical revolt against Delius. This, significantly enough, dates from the time when Heseltine first heard some of the music of Bernard van Dieren and wrote the following extremely important and interesting letter to him (I am quoting the letters from Gray's biography) :

> ' I was so utterly overwhelmed by your music this afternoon that all words failed me . . . It is always when I feel most deeply that expression is most completely denied me. And so I feel I have to write and tell you—inarticulately enough—what a profound impression my visit to you has made upon me. It has brought me to a turning-point, opened out a vista of a new land ; it has brought to a climax the dissatisfaction and spiritual unrest that have been tormenting me for months past . . .
>
> Your music . . . is nothing short of a revelation to me. I have been groping about aimlessly in the dark for so long with ever-growing exasperation—and at last you have shown a light, alone among composers I have met ; for neither Delius nor any other has ever so much as suggested a practical solution of the initial difficulties of musical composition. I know that it is as idiotic to flounder about, without plan or purpose in music as I have been doing as to become Professor of Composition at

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> the R.A.M. Rather than do either of these things I would abandon music altogether. If I am not to do this, it will be necessary for me to begin everything anew, *ab ovo*.'
>
> (Letter to Bernard van Dieren, June, 1916).

I had not read this letter when I wrote about van Dieren but it is certainly excellent testimony to the ways in which van Dieren is likely to be an inspiring example to young and tentative composers. In Heseltine's case the first-fruits of this enthusiasm were the three *Saudades* (1916), songs which were quite frankly exercises in van Dieren's manner—in van Dieren's vocal, less polyphonic, manner—and quite obviously the work of a very remarkable and distinguished talent. Through van Dieren's example, Heseltine has found himself ; the lush Delian chromaticisms, always rather artificial in the hands of anyone but Delius himself, almost entirely disappear, and the harmony is subtle and delicate, rendered clear and lucid by the discipline of counterpoint. Heseltine eventually became a pupil of van Dieren but it is important to note that the technique which he perfected for his own mature works is no more ' like ' that of van Dieren than it is ' like ' that of Delius. What van Dieren taught him was that ' the success of externalization in art depends solely on interior clarity. I do not believe that it is possible for utterance to be impeded by " lack of technique." I believe that those who imagine themselves so impeded simply deceive themselves because the truth is not in them, that is to say they have not yet focused that truth they would utter aloud within themselves. Their cry is simply an excuse . . . to cover their inability to see clearly.'[1] (Letter to Cecil Gray). Van Dieren taught Heseltine to ' see clearly ' ; he made it possible for perfect externalization to be given to the contemporary melancholy and nostalgia of Heseltine as it was vivified and intensified by the intellect and penetration of Warlock.

What Heseltine thought about his art and about the position

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[1]And hence if we feel that there is something not quite satisfactory about Delius's ' technique ' we mean that there was something wrong about Delius ; not that he was deficient in technical ' skill.' Obviously he had complete mastery of his own medium—as far as it went.

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of the artist to-day he describes at considerable length in his letters, and I must here be forgiven another rather lengthy quotation:

> 'Humanity in the cage of materialism is like a child with a toy of which the normal interest has long been exhausted. In desperation he tries what can be done with the toy upside down, whether any fresh possibilities are revealed by turning it inside out; finally there is nothing left but to smash it to bits . . .
>
> All art is simply the making known of the unknown. Most of the art of to-day, consisting of the making known of what is perfectly well known already, is verily "the Pretence of Art to destroy Art." The modern cry of "self-expression" . . . proves this beyond shadow of doubt. The self is carefully partitioned, and when the surface portion has become completely static and completely cut off both from its own roots and from everything that, in its drunken diplobia, it considers the not-self, it proceeds to strut about before a mirror and call its vain reflections works of art. The true self can never be static . . . This boundary fence between the conscious and the sub- or super-conscious is an arbitrary and artificial thing; we should know, if only as an act of faith, that . . . "the soul's depths" are perpetually creative, that in them is a spring that is joined with all the waters under the earth, a spring that will ever be bubbling up fresh water to the surface of its own accord—if only we will let it.' (Letter to Cecil Gray).

I have quoted this passage because it shows how far from crankiness Heseltine's excursions into mysticism and occultism really were—or at least how little he was self-deceived. His development, indeed, has certain parallels with that of Yeats, although, of course, Delius was, though a similar, an easier influence to grow out of than that of the 'nineties and pre-Raphaelitism. Yeats, we must remember, was Heseltine's favourite poet and there is certainly some connection between what, in actual practice, 'mysticism' meant for the one and 'magic' for the other. The atmosphere of legend, of folk-legend, which surrounds much of the mature poetry of Yeats and the music of Heseltine-Warlock is no romantic twilight regression but a completely 'modern' recognition of the necessity for belief in something more than self-expression; (*cf.*

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Yeats's belief in symbols—'Whatever the passions of men have gathered about becomes a symbol in the Great Memory and in the hands of him that has the secret it is a worker of wonders, a caller up of angels or of devils'). The music of Heseltine-Warlock, the mature poetry of Yeats, are never themselves mystical or magical, but passionate, human, and proud. They are the work of adult and powerful minds; the element of the past in them is there only for its implicit relation to the present, a relation which the artists have seized and realized.

There is, therefore, nothing fantastic in the fact that Heseltine should have been able, as no one else has been able, to re-interpret the Elizabethan art-song and the English folk-song on which that art-form depended, in purely modern terms. When he writes a melody which in shapeliness, grace and tenderness may properly be compared with one of John Dowland, as in such a wonderful song as *Sleep* or some of the *Peterisms* (both 1922); or when he writes a melody which has all the spontaneity and humanity of English folk-song as in the four songs grouped under the title of *Lillygay* (1922); the question of pastiche does not even arise. He is merely here employing a method of allusiveness; the Elizabethan or folky element does not jar with the delicate chromatic harmony, the exquisite interweaving of parts in canon or counterpoint. The influence of van Dieren is completely assimilated; and these songs, because of their allusive method, have a profundity which is lacking in the more obviously 'modern' nostalgia of such a song as *A Prayer to Saint Anthony of Padua* or *The Sick Heart* (1925), beautiful as these songs may be.

But there is another and equally important aspect of Heseltine's music which may be related to the poetry of Yeats, and that is the element of 'the fascination of what's difficult,' of 'now I may wither into the truth.' I am thinking partly of such superb songs as *The Ghostly Fader* (1918), or the *Corpus Christi* for mixed voices (1919)—an astonishing example of the 'modern' significance with which an apparent mediævalism can be invested—but in particular I am thinking of the settings for baritone and chamber orchestra which Heseltine made of some poems of Yeats himself and which were unified together in the work called *The Curlew* (1922). This composition is, I think, one of the masterpieces of our time and it is certainly the most important

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work that this composer achieved, 'Withering' is a word one thinks of immediately in connection with this music. Whereas the technique of the 'Elizabethan' or folky songs is comparatively straightforward and diatonic, here the melodic lines are twisted and contorted, the harmony is bare, intense, with an almost terrible economy.[1] Mr. Cecil Gray thinks that this work was a late manifestation of the early introspective Heseltine, but it seems to me that the tough intellectual fibre, the rather sinister power of this melancholy, is attributable—as I have already suggested—to the interaction of Warlock on Heseltine. What, anyway, is important to notice is that this despair is completely controlled; it is not an emotional outburst, it is not merely an expression of 'feeling,' it is the complete and exhaustive 'externalization' of a contemporary nostalgia that amounts to a 'vision of reality,' avoiding as it does both the pitfalls of 'rhetorician' and 'sentimentalist.' It is terse where Delius is rhapsodic; and because it is so completely objective there is never any suspicion of our obtaining a vaguely masochistic or self-pitying satisfaction from it as we occasionally tend to with Delius. That Heseltine-Warlock was aware of what he was feeling rather than blind to it as was Delius nevertheless makes this music much more agonizing to listen to; nor is there any alleviation of the gloom, or a jot of spurious comfort. As Mr. Gray says, 'I do not know of any music more utterly desolating to hear than *The Curlew*'; and Mr. Fenby remarks, 'It is the saddest music I know.' And the reason why this music is of greater intensity than that of Delius is precisely because it is more than a matter of 'feeling,' because 'more of the "whole soul of man" is involved, and in more ways.' Thus although it too is utterly 'without hope' I think this music is more valuable for us at the present day than any single work of Delius. Delius's music is a cul-de-sac; *The Curlew* is in a sense a point from which the music of van Dieren may be said to carry on.[2]

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[1]The technical characteristics of this music may be most easily examined in that marvellous song *The Fox* (O.U.P.).

[2]Because its 'despair' is of the present and doesn't tend to the past or 'deathwards'; not technically, for Heseltine's music is comparatively homophonic.

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There are a few other works in the manner of *The Curlew*, notably the setting of Beddoes' *Sorrow's Lullaby* for soprano, baritone, and string quartet (1927), and the choral *Three Dirges of Webster* (1925)—the latter 'probably the gloomiest and grisliest that even Philip Heseltine ever wrote, which is saying a good deal' (Cecil Gray)—but this music is so inordinately difficult of execution that the chances of hearing it adequately performed are very slender. It seems that Heseltine had to renounce the composition of works on an extended scale when he renounced Delius, and that he was aware of this is attested by the following interesting letter which he wrote to van Dieren:

> 'Sometimes I feel that this exiguous output of tiny works is too futile to be continued—though I have neither the impulse nor the ability to erect monuments before which a new generation will bow down. And when I think of some of the 'monumental' composers in present-day England alone, I feel that I would rather spend my life trying to achieve one tiny book of songs that shall have a lasting fragrance than pile up tome on tome on the dusty shelves of the British Museum.'

This was written in 1920, before the composition of *The Curlew* and before, for that matter, the composition of his finest songs. There is in it the characteristic acuteness, and the characteristic modesty. An excessive modesty indeed, for his achievement was more remarkable than that of Philip Rosseter, with whom he compares himself. Philip Heseltine was, and had to be, made of sterner metal.

W. H. MELLERS.

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HENRY JAMES[1]

IN bringing together in *The Art of the Novel* Henry James's Prefaces—the famous prefaces that he wrote to the New York Edition of his works—Mr. R. P. Blackmur has done something very much worth doing, and the publishers are to be thanked for giving us the long-desiderated book. Yet, if we find Mr. Blackmur's Introduction disappointing, we have, after reading the book through, to recognize that the disappointment really goes back to the Prefaces themselves.

> 'Criticism has never been more ambitious, nor more useful. There has never been a body of work so eminently suited to criticism as the fiction of Henry James and there has never been an author who so saw the need and had the ability to criticize specifically and at length his own work. He was avid of his opportunity and both proud and modest as to what he did with it. "These notes," he wrote in the Preface to *Roderick Hudson*, "represent, over a considerable course, the continuity of an artist's endeavour, the growth of his whole operative consciousness . . ."'

—If this is high promise, it is a promise answering to our expectation, to our general sense of Henry James.

Mr. Blackmur, in the succeeding thirty pages of his Introduction, disappoints because, though besides classifying the Prefaces and enumerating James's themes he also summarizes and comments, he conveys no effect of vigorous and lucid argument, of issues clearly perceived and decisively set forth: the Introduction, in fact, seems laboured and unenlightening. If we at first think this due to excessive modesty or lack of ambition in Mr. Blackmur—to his having confined himself too much to listing and grouping, we afterwards discover that to have done anything more satisfying he would have to have been very much the reverse of modest and unambitious: he would have to have

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[1] *The Art of the Novel*: Critical Prefaces by Henry James, with an Introduction by Richard P. Blackmur (Scribners, 10/6).

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done what Henry James has not. And if we have finally a criticism to pass against him it is that he encourages us to expect what we are not, in fact, given.

For such a failure (as I judge it) to come to the necessary recognition there is a great deal of excuse: the Prefaces make difficult reading, the extraordinary distinction of the mind they come from is apparent in them, and this distinction asserts itself in the very difficulty. The impressed, modest and tired reader comes away crediting James with achievement that is not really there. If Mr. Blackmur, as we must grant, is an unusually well-qualified reader, he is also a specialist, and a formal introducer preoccupied with establishing his author's claims to attention.

Mr. Blackmur has certainly read the Prefaces and knows them through and through. It is characteristic of the contemporary cult of Henry James (if it can be called that), and evidence of a real need for re-stating his claims in general to attention, that several of the contributors to the Henry James number of the *Hound and Horn* (April-June, 1934) in which Mr. Blackmur's Introduction first appeared expose themselves as not having read, or having not been able to read, the works they write about. *The Portrait of a Lady* is not of the late, difficult period (to which the Prefaces very much belong) but one critic (H. R. Hays, writing on *Henry James the Satirist*) tells us that the situation it presents ' is resolved into a conventional happy ending with a divorce and a rescue by the American business man.' It is difficult to believe that anyone who had actually read, however carelessly or incompetently, to the end could have made that of it. But then it is difficult to believe that anyone capable of making anything at all of Henry James could pronounce as another contributor, Mr. Stephen Spender, does: ' A third of this book is taken up with brush work which has nothing to do with the story, but much to do with James's determination that he would really present Isabel Archer to us.' After that we are hardly surprised when Mr. Spender tells us that ' there is something particularly obscene about *What Maisie Knew*, in which a small girl is, in a rather admiring way, exhibited as prying into the sexual lives of her very promiscuous elders '— hardly surprised, though the consummately ' done ' theme of *What Maisie Knew* is the incorruptible innocence of Maisie ; innocence that not merely preserves itself in what might have seemed to be

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irresistibly corrupting circumstances, but can even generate decency out of the egotistic squalors of adult personal relations. The intention described by James in the Preface is, in the story, realized:

> 'No themes are so human as those that reflect for us, out of the confusion of life, the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt, so dangling before us for ever that bright hard medal, of so strange an alloy, one face of which is somebody's right and ease and the other somebody's pain and wrong. To live with all intensity and perplexity and felicity in its terribly mixed little world would thus be the part of my interesting small mortal ; bringing people together who would be at least more correctly separate ; keeping people separate who would be at least more correctly together ; flourishing, to a degree, at the cost of many conventions and proprieties, even decencies, really keeping the torch of virtue alive in an air tending infinitely to smother it ; really in short making confusion worse confounded by drawing some stray fragrance of an ideal across the scent of selfishness, by sowing on barren strands, through the mere face of presence, the seed of the moral life.'

It would, one would have thought, be possible to read *The Portrait of a Lady* quite lazily, 'for the story,' without missing the whole point as completely as Mr. Spender misses it. *What Maisie Knew*, on the other hand, does certainly demand of the reader a close and unrelaxed attention, an actively intelligent collaboration ; it never permits us to find it 'as easy to read as a novel.' Nevertheless, that the general nature of the theme could, on any perusal, escape recognition still seems remarkable. Yet it is not very especially remarkable in the criticism and appreciation of James's later work. For instance, as respectable a critic as Mr. Van Wyck Brooks can write:[1] 'A young man who is represented as "a gentleman, generally sound and generally pleasant," straightway appears without any adequate explanation as engaged in the most atrocious of conspiracies (Merton Densher in *The Wings of the Dove*.)' That would appear to amount to

[1] *The Pilgrimage of Henry James*, p. 133.

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nothing better than the reading given us by H. R. Hays in the *Hound and Horn*: 'The villain, Merton Densher, or Kate in *The Wings of the Dove*, Madame Merle in the *Portrait* . . . '

Now, wherever *The Wings of the Dove* may fail, it is not in the presentment of Kate Croy and Merton Densher. All the subtleties, obliquities and indirections of Henry James's art are devoted, triumphantly, to showing us Densher being drawn, resisting and never acquiescing, into a position in which he cannot but, in spite of himself, be a party to a conspiracy—a conspiracy which he has never connived at or countenanced. He is in love with Kate—they are 'in love' in the full common sense of the phrase, and the direct strength with which the attraction between the lovers is conveyed (a strength not common, it must be confessed, in James, whose lack of freedom with the physical Mr. Spender finds 'vulgar') makes the presentment of Densher's unwilling complicity the more convincing. And even Kate Croy, whose resolute intention constitutes the conspiracy, is not presented as a villain—if 'villain' denotes a character whose 'wicked' behaviour we simply, without any motions of sympathy, condemn. Her resoluteness, as a matter of fact, appears to us as partly admirable; the pressures driving her—her hateful outlawed father, the threatening fate represented by her married sister's overwhelming domestic squalors, the inflexible ambition of her magnificently vulgar aunt, Mrs. Lowder—are conveyed with such force as to make them seem, for a person of such proud and admirable vitality, irresistible. Henry James's art, that is, has a moral fineness so far beyond the perception of his critics that they can accuse him of the opposite. This fineness, this clairvoyant moral intelligence, is the informing spirit of that technique by the indirections and inexplicitnesses of which these critics are baffled.

This fineness it is that, at James's best, the technique serves and expresses. But *The Wings of the Dove* is nevertheless not a successful work; it does not as a whole show James at his best. The great, the disabling failure is in the presentment of the Dove, Milly Theale. As he says in the Preface,

> 'the case prescribed for its central figure a sick young woman, at the whole course of whose disintegration and the whole ordeal of whose consciousness one would have quite honestly to assist.'

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But later in the Preface he notes (finding it on re-perusal of the book ' striking, charming and curious ')

> ' the author's instinct everywhere for the *indirect* presentation of his main image. I note how, again and again, I go but a little way with the direct—that is, with the straight exhibition of Milly ; it resorts for relief, this process, whenever it can, to some kinder, more merciful indirection: all as if to approach her circuitously, deal with her at second hand, as an unspotted princess is ever dealt with ; the pressure all round her kept easy for her, the sounds, the movements, regulated, the forms and ambiguities made charming.'

James was deceived. A vivid, particularly realized Milly might for him stand in the midst of his indirections, but what for his reader these skirt round is too much like emptiness ; she isn't there, and the fuss the other characters make about her as the ' Dove ' has the effect of an irritating sentimentality.

This inveterate indirectness of the later James, this aim of presenting, of leaving presented, the essential thing by working round and behind so that it shapes itself in the space left amidst a context of hints and apprehensions, is undoubtedly a vice in the Prefaces ; it accounts for their unsatisfactoriness. It appears there, in criticism, as an inability to state—an inability to tackle his theme, or to get anything out clearly and finally. Not that the Prefaces don't contain a good deal that arrests the reader, and that is particularly impressive in quotation ; but the developed and done is exasperatingly disproportionate to the laboured doing and the labour of reading.

Still, the novels are another matter. Criticism is not the art of fiction, and James's technical preoccupations, the development of his style and method, are obviously bound up with his essential genius ; they are expressions of his magnificent intelligence, of his intense and delicate interest in human nature. No direct and peremptory grasp could handle the facts, the data, the material that concerned him most ; and the moral situations that seemed to him most worth exploring were not such as invited blunt and confident judgments of simple ' good ' and ' bad.' Mr. Edmund Wilson, writing for the memorial number of the *Hound and Horn* what is by far the most distinguished contribution, calls his theme

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The Ambiguity of Henry James. After giving an original and extremely convincing account of *The Turn of the Screw*, he goes on to argue that, as the later manner developed, the subtleties of James's technique, the inexplicitnesses and indirections of his methods of presentment, tended to subserve a fundamental ambiguity ; one, that is, about which he was not himself clear. For instance, of the central figure in *The Sacred Fount* we are left asking: ' Is the obnoxious week-end guest one of what used to be called the élite, a fastidious highly civilized sensibility, or is he merely morbid and a bore?' And Mr. Wilson suggests that James himself doesn't really know. The explanation?—

> ' In Henry James's mind, there disputed all his life the European and the American points of view ; and their debate, I believe, is closely connected with his inability sometimes to be clear as to what he thinks of a certain sort of person.'

Now it is certainly true that James's development was towards over-subtlety, and that with this development we must associate a loss of sureness in his moral touch, an unsatisfactoriness that in some of the more ambitious late works leads us to question his implicit valuations. But this unsatisfactoriness at its worst—at any rate at its most important—seems to be something more decided than the ambiguity that Mr. Wilson illustrates from *The Sacred Fount*. It is what we have in *The Golden Bowl*, for example, which is one of the late ' great ' novels, and, beyond any question, representatively on the line of his development. There James clearly counts on our taking towards his main persons attitudes that we cannot take without forgetting our finer moral sense—our finer discriminative feeling for life and personality. Adam Verver, the American plutocrat, and his daughter Maggie ' collect ' the Prince in much the same spirit as that in which they collect their other ' pieces.' James is explicit about it:

> ' Nothing perhaps might strike us queerer than this application of the same measure of value to such different pieces of property as old Persian carpets, say, and new human acquisitions ; all the more, indeed, that the amiable man was not without an inkling that he was, as a taster of life, economically constructed. He put into his own little glass everything he raised to his lips . . . ' [Vol. I. p. 175].

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He acquires later Charlotte Stant, another fine 'piece'—acquires her as a wife in order to settle the uneasiness that Maggie feels about the difference made in his life by her own marriage (though actually father and daughter seem to be as constantly and completely together as before). This is how he sees them in the concluding scene of the novel:

> 'The two noble persons seated in conversation and at tea fell then into the splendid effect and the general harmony: Mrs. Verver and the Prince fairly "placed" themselves, however unwittingly, as high expressions of the kind of human furniture required esthetically by such a scene. The fusion of their presence with the decorative elements, their contribution to the triumph of selection, was complete and admirable; though to a lingering view, a view more penetrating than the occasion really demanded, they might have figured as concrete attestations of a rare power of purchase.' [Vol. II, p. 317].

And yet, though James can on occasion come to this point of explicitness, our attitude towards the Ververs isn't meant to be ironical. We are to feel for and with them. We are to watch with intense sympathy Maggie's victorious struggle to break the clandestine relation between her husband and Charlotte, establish the pretence that nothing has occurred, and get Charlotte safely packed off under a life-sentence to America, the penal settlement. Actually, if our sympathies are anywhere they are with Charlotte and (a little) the Prince, who represent what, against the general moral background of the book, can only strike us as decent passion; in a stale, sickly and oppressive atmosphere they represent life. That in our feelings about the Ververs there would be any element of distaste Henry James, in spite of the passages quoted, seems to have had no inkling.

Mr. Wilson, of course, might find here another illustration for his theme of ambiguity. But actually what we have in this aspect of *The Golden Bowl* would seem to be, rather than any radical ambiguity in James, a partial inattention—an inadvertence. It is as if his interest in his material had been too specialized, too much concentrated on certain limited kinds of possible development, and as if in the technical elaboration expressing this specialized interest he had lost his full sense of life and let his

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moral taste slip into abeyance. *The Ambassadors* too, which he seems to have thought his greatest success, produces an effect of disproportionate 'doing'—of a technique the subtleties and elaborations of which are not sufficiently controlled by a feeling for value and significance in living. What, we ask, is this, symbolized by Paris, that Strether feels himself to have missed in his own life? Has James himself sufficiently inquired? Is it anything adequately realized? If we are to take the elaboration of the theme in the spirit in which we are meant to take it, haven't we to take the symbol too much at the glamorous face-value it has for Strether? Isn't, that is, the energy of the 'doing' and the energy demanded for the reading disproportionate to the issues—to any issues that are concretely held and presented?

It is characteristic of Henry James's fate that, while it should be generally agreed that something went wrong with his development, it should at the same time be almost as generally agreed that the books we ought to know—the books he ought to be known by—are the three last long novels, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1905). *The Ambassadors* in particular has probably, since Mr. Percy Lubbock picked on it in *The Craft of Fiction* (Mr. E. M. Forster confirmed him in *Aspects of the Novel*), been the book most commonly attempted by those wishing to qualify in Henry James. This is to be deplored, since not only is *The Portrait of a Lady* much more likely, once started, to be read through and read with unfeigned enjoyment; it is much more worth reading. At any rate, it seems to me to be James's finest achievement, and one of the great novels of the English language.

The Portrait of a Lady (1881) belongs to his early maturity. Just before and after come *Washington Square* and *The Bostonians*, novels which ought to be generally current classics; that they are not can only be due to the fact that we are all sent to the late difficult works first. The two last-named are wholly American in theme and setting, and all three have the abundant, full-blooded life of well-nourished organisms. It is, of course, in terms of his deracination that Henry James's unsatisfactory development is commonly explained. The theory is what we find, in its most respectable statement, advanced by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks in *The Pilgrimage of Henry James*. The less delicate expositions more

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or less bluntly censure James for not having stayed in America and become a thoroughly American novelist. He should have devoted his genius to his own country and inaugurated modern American—the first truly American—literature.

What, we ask, when the theory becomes explicit to this point, does it mean? That Henry James ought to have forestalled the work of Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis? That he ought to have devoted himself to preparing the way for a much earlier Dos Passos? It means that he ought at any rate to have been a totally different kind of writer from what he actually, either by endowment or through early life and environment, was.

For his essential interests were inseparable from an interest in highly civilized manners, in the refinements of civilized intercourse. The social civilization that in America might have yielded him (or seemed to yield) what he needed was, as Mrs. Wharton, in her autobiographical book, *A Backward Glance*, points out, vanishing with his youth. England had certainly more to offer him than America had. But, says Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, 'England was impenetrable.'

> 'Granting that he had lost the immediate sense of life and character, that America had faded from his mind and that he knew that he could never write of English manners with the intimacy and freedom which his conception of the novelist's task necessitated . . . '

—But how, remembering (for instance) *The Awkward Age* (1899) and *What Maisie Knew* (1897), can we grant this last proposition? The author of these two masterpieces, which were written after that notorious dividing phase, the odd, sustained and frustrate attempt upon the theatre, hardly suffered from any sense that he was not qualified to write of English manners with freedom and intimacy. Rather he knew English manners too well ; he had penetrated too thoroughly.

The obvious constatation to start from, when the diagnosis of his queer development is in question, is that he suffered from being too much a professional novelist: being a novelist came to be too large a part of his living ; that is, he did not live enough. His failure in this respect suggests, no doubt, some initial deficiency in him. Nevertheless, the peculiarities in terms of which it demands

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to be discussed are far from appearing as simple weakness. It is no doubt odd that his interest in manners should have gone with such moral-intellectual intensity. But the manners he was interested in were to be the outward notation of spiritual and intellectual fineness, or at least to lend themselves to treatment as such. Essentially he was in quest of an ideal society, an ideal civilization. And English society, he had to recognize as he lived into it, could not after all offer him any sustaining approximation to his ideal. Still less, he knew, could America. So we find him developing into something like a paradoxical kind of recluse, a recluse living socially in the midst of society.

But a real recluse, living in unmetaphorical retreat, is just what we cannot imagine him. In saying this we are, no doubt, touching on certain limiting characteristics of his genius. It was not the explorer's or the pioneer's, and it had nothing prophetic about it. It was not of a kind to manifest itself in lonely plumbings of the psyche or passionate questionings of the familiar modes of human experience. It was not, in short, D. H. Lawrence's or anything like it. James had no such immediate sense of human solidarity (in spite of such admirable things as *In the Cage*), no such nourishing intuition of the unity of life, as could make up to him for the deficiencies of civilized intercourse: life for him must be humane or it was nothing. There was nowhere in his work that preoccupation with ultimate sanctions which we may call religious. (There comes to my mind here the significant badness of *The Altar of the Dead*, that morbidly sentimental and extremely unpleasant tale which—it is, of course, late—also illustrates poor James's weary, civilized loneliness of spirit). It was to the artist as such that the discrepancy between the desiderated civilization and English society was peculiarly brought home:

> 'The artist may, of course, in wanton moods, dream of some Paradise (for art) where the direct appeal to the intelligence might be legalized; for to such extravagances as these his yearning mind can scarce hope ever completely to close itself. The most he can do is to remember they *are* extravagances.'

James has already remarked in this Preface (it is that to *The Portrait of a Lady*) that the novelist

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'is entitled to nothing, he is bound to admit, that can come to him, from the reader, as a result on the latter's part of any act of reflexion or discrimination.'

These bitter ironies abound in the Prefaces, which, he wrote to W. D. Howells,

'are, in general, a sort of plea for Criticism, for Discrimination, for Appreciation on other than infantile lines—as against the so almost universal Anglo-Saxon absence of these things ; which tends, in our general trade, it seems to me, to break the heart . . . '

The comments in the Preface to *The Lesson of the Master* on the story called *The Figure in the Carpet* are especially significant. Speaking of his great unappreciated author James says:

> 'I came to Hugh Vereker, in fine, by this travelled road of a generalization ; the habit of having noted for many years how strongly and helplessly, among us all, what we call criticism—its curiosity never emerging from the limp state—is apt to stand off from the intended sense of things, from such finely attested matters, on the artist's part, as a spirit and a form, a bias and a logic, of his own.'

He has already referred with less detachment to

'the poor man's attributive dependence, for the sense of being understood, on some responsive reach of critical perception that he is destined never to waylay with success . . . '

And the force of that attribution comes out unmistakably in the eloquent reticence of this:

> 'As for the ingenious *Figure in the Carpet*, let me perhaps a little pusillanimously conclude, nothing would induce me to come to close quarters with you on the correspondences of this anecdote . . . All I can at this point say is that if ever I was aware of ground and matter for a significant fable, I was aware of them in that connexion.'

He was indeed ; and if he could have foreseen the criticism and appreciation, starting with Miss Rebecca West's characteristic tribute, his work would receive in the two decades following his

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death he would hardly have been consoled.

The same conditions, then, that drove him back on his art made him profoundly aware that his art wasn't likely to be appreciated by many besides himself.[1] So he came to live in it—and not the less so for living strenuously—the life of a spiritual recluse ; a recluse in a sense in which not only no novelist but no good artist of any kind can afford to become one. His technique came to exhibit an unhealthy vitality of undernourishment and etiolation. His technical preoccupation, to put it another way, lost its balance, and, instead of being the sharp register of his finest perceptions, as informed and related by his fullest sense of life, became something that took his intelligence out of its true focus and blunted his sensitiveness. That is the mischief of what he discusses in the Prefaces as a possible tendency in himself towards 'overtreatment.' Correlated with this tendency is that manifested in the extraordinarily specialized living of his characters:

> 'The immensity didn't include *them* ; but if he had an idea at the back of his head she had also one in a recess as deep, and for a time, while they sat together, there was an extraordinary mute passage between her vision of this vision of his, his vision of her vision, and her vision of his vision of her vision.'[2]

This last aspect of his development is the more significant—significant in the sense suggested—in that he was, it seems, quite unaware of it. Mrs. Wharton records (*A Backward Glance*, p. 191):

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[1] *Cf.* what the author says to his young visitor in *The Author of Beltraffio*: 'If you're going into this kind of thing there's a fact you should know beforehand ; it may save you some disappointment. There's a hatred of art, there's a hatred of literature—I mean of the genuine kinds. Oh the shams—*those* they'll swallow by the bucket!'

[2] *What Maisie Knew*, p. 163 (pocket edition). *Cf.* 'There were other marble terraces, sweeping more purple prospects, on which he would have known what to think, and would have enjoyed thereby at least the small intellectual fillip of a discerned relation between a given appearance and a taken meaning.' *The Golden Bowl*, I, 318.

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' Preoccupied by this, I one day said to him: " What was your idea in suspending the four principal characters in *The Golden Bowl* in the void? What sort of life did they lead when they were not watching each other, and fencing with each other? Why have you stripped them of all the *human fringes* we necessarily trail after us through life?"

He looked at me in surprise, and I saw at once that the surprise was painful, and wished I had not spoken. I had assumed that his system was a deliberate one, carefully thought out, and had been genuinely anxious to hear his reasons. But after a pause of reflection he answered in a disturbed voice: " My dear—I didn't know I had!" and I saw that my question, instead of starting one of our absorbing literary discussions, had only turned his startled attention on a peculiarity of which he had been completely unconscious.'[1]

Of the peculiarities of his later style, with its complexities and exhausting delicacies and its incapacity for directness (' her vision of his vision of her vision ' and ' the small intellectual fillip between a given appearance and a taken meaning '—James himself is the complete Jamesian character), he cannot have been wholly unconscious. That there really was incapacity, essential loss of a power, that something had gone wrong in his life, Mrs. Wharton brings amusingly home to us. She relates an episode showing him unable to ask the way so as to be understood.[2] The author of *The Portrait of a Lady* most certainly was not like that.

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[1]Mrs. Wharton goes on: ' This sensitiveness to criticism or comment of any sort had nothing to do with vanity ; it was caused by the great artist's deep consciousness of his powers, combined with a bitter, a life-long disappointment at his lack of popular recognition.'

[2]' " My good man, if you'll be good enough to come here, please ; a little nearer—so," and as the old man came up: " My friend, to put it to you in two words, this lady and I have just arrived here from *Slough* ; that is to say, to be more strictly accurate, we have recently *passed through* Slough on our way here, having actually motored to Windsor from Rye, which was our point of departure ; and the darkness having overtaken us, we should be much obliged if you would tell us where we are now in relation,

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The nature of the change comes out notably in James's imagery—his metaphors, analogies and so on. There is an extraordinary wealth of these in the earlier style, where they strike us with their poetic immediacy and their rightness to feeling as well as their wit. They are to be found at any opening of *The Portrait of a Lady*, and it would be easy to illustrate; but illustration, by taking each natural unobtrusive effect out of the easy flow in which it comes, would convey a false impression (unless one quoted the sustained passage in Book II[3] in which we are for the first time shown Isabel realizing the 'dark, narrow alley with a drab wall at the end' into which her marriage has trapped her). Things of the same kind may be found in the later books, but what goes characteristically with the developed Jamesian style is a more deliberate and elaborated kind of figure, the kind exemplified at its most elaborate by the famous pagoda that opens Book II of *The Golden Bowl* or by the caravan later on in the same volume (p. 209). We are conscious in these figures more of analysis,

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say, to the High Street, which, as you of course know, leads to the Castle, after leaving on the left hand the turn down to the railway station."

I was not surprised to have this extraordinary appeal met by silence, and a dazed expression on the old wrinkled face at the window; nor to have James go on; "In short" (his invariable prelude to a fresh series of explanatory ramifications), "in short, my good man, what I want to put to you in a word is this: supposing we have already (as I have reason to think we have) driven past the turn down to the railway station (which, in that case, by the way, would probably not have been on our left hand, but on our right), where are we now in relation to . . ."

"Oh, please," I interrupted, feeling myself utterly unable to sit through another parenthesis, "do ask him where the King's Road is."

"Ah—? The King's Road? Just so! Quite right! Can you, as a matter of fact, my good man, tell us where, in relation to our present position, the King's Road exactly *is*?"

"Ye're in it," said the aged face at the window.'

[3]See p. 166 *et seq.*, the Pocket Edition.

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demonstration and comment than of the realizing imagination and the play of poetic perception. Between any original perception or feeling there may have been and what we are given there has come a process of judicial stock-taking ; the imagery is not immediate and inevitable but synthetic. It is diagrammatic rather than poetic. And that is so even when it makes a show of sensuous vividness, as here:

> ' Just three things in themselves, however, with all the rest, with his fixed purpose now, his committed deed, the fine pink glow, projected forward, of his ships, behind him, definitely blazing and crackling—this quantity was to push him harder than any word of his own could warn him. All that she was herself, moreover, was so lighted, to its advantage, by the pink glow.'

This hasn't the concrete immediacy of metaphor ;[1] it is, rather, coloured diagram.

The trouble with the late style is that it exacts so intensely and inveterately analytic an attention that no sufficient bodied response builds up: nothing sufficiently approaching the deferred concrete immediacy that has been earned is attainable. Of Henry James himself we feel that the style involves for him, registers as prevailing *in* him, a kind of attention that doesn't favour his realizing his theme, in the whole or locally, as full-bodied life. The relation between deficiency of this order (a deficiency—in spite of the tremendous output of intellectual energy represented by each work—in vitality) and the kind of moral unsatisfactoriness that we have

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[1]As the following, also from *The Golden Bowl*, has: ' Ah then it was that the cup of her conviction, full to the brim, overflowed at a touch! *There* was his idea, the clearness of which for an instant almost dazzled her. It was a blur of light in the midst of which she saw Charlotte like some object marked by contrast in blackness, saw her waver in the field of vision, saw her removed, transported, doomed. And he had named Charlotte, named her again, and she had *made* him—which was all she had needed more: it was as she had held a blank letter to the fire and the writing had come out still larger than she had hoped.'—The analogy in the last sentence brings out by contrast the metaphorical immediacy of what goes before.

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observed in *The Golden Bowl* should be fairly plain. James himself suggests it well enough in the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*:

> 'There is, I think, no more nutritive or suggestive truth in this connexion than that of the perfect dependence of the "moral" sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it. The question comes back thus, obviously, to the kind and degree of the artist's prime sensibility, which is the soil out of which his subject springs.'

—We do not feel in the late style a rich and lively sensibility freely functioning.

But qualifications impose themselves at once. It will not do to suggest that there are not, in the late period, admirable successes, works in which distinctively late and difficult characteristics appear merely or mainly as achieved subtlety and fineness. Of these the most notable are *The Awkward Age* and *What Maisie Knew*. Of the latter something has already been said. Though it occupies only part of a volume, it might, with its packed and intensively organized three hundred pages, stand as a novel. *The Awkward Age* occupies a whole volume and may (though it doesn't occupy two) fairly be considered one of James's major achievements. It seems unlikely, however, to gain general acceptance as such: it was received at its first appearance, James tells us, with 'complete disrespect,' and the critics who have written about it seem to have found it not worth the extremely close and alert reading it demands. So qualified a critic as Mr. Edmund Wilson, for instance, opines that 'James could never have known how we should feel about the gibbering disembowelled crew who hover around one another with sordid shadowy designs in *The Awkward Age*.' Actually, the various ways in which we are to feel about the various characters are delicately but surely defined; and the whole point of the book depends upon our feeling a strong distaste for some of the characters and sharing with James a critical attitude towards most of them. Yet for the general complete misreading James possibly bears some responsibility—responsibility other than that of having merely been difficult and subtle. When, for example, Mr. Percy Lubbock in *The Craft of Fiction* sees the 'highly sophisticated circle of men and women, who seem so well practised in the art of living that

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they could never be taken by surprise ' (p. 191) as an admirable coterie to which one would be proud to belong (' Their intelligence counts for everything . . . ' ' It is a charmed world . . . ') he might reasonably point to the Preface for his warrant. And he might reasonably invoke the same authority for his account of James's theme:

> ' The girl Nanda, supposedly a helpless spectator, takes control of the situation and works it out for her elders. She is the intelligent and expert and self-possessed one of them all ; they have only to leave everything to her light manipulations, and the awkwardness—which is theirs, not hers—is surmounted. By the time she has displayed all her art the story is at an end ; her action has answered the question and provided the issue.'

That is the notion of the theme one gets from the Preface. It is an ironical commentary on the significance and drift of James's later technical preoccupation that, discussing ten years after having written *The Awkward Age* the triumphant *tour de force* that it was for him (a novel completely dramatized, ' triumphantly scientific,' ' the *quantity* of finish it stows away '), he should have forgotten to say anything about his essential theme—about the intense moral and tragic interest that here justifies his technique and is justified by it. For *The Awkward Age*, though it exhibits James's genius for social comedy at its most brilliant, is a tragedy ; a tragedy conceived in an imagination that was robustly, delicately and clairvoyantly moral.

The dialogue (and *The Awkward Age* is nearly all dialogue) is marvellously good, an amazing exhibition of genius. It is in this life of the dialogue that *The Awkward Age* differs most obviously from the late ' great,' conventionally admired novels, where, while granting the author's right to stylize, we have to complain that his characters speak in a stylization that is too often intolerably like the author's own late style. And this life of the dialogue, fascinating in itself, also means a subtle, vivid and varied life of character. Nevertheless, perhaps even *The Awkward Age*, brilliant success as it it, represents a disproportionate amount of ' doing,' a disproportionate interest in technique. Certainly Nanda, the tragic heroine, is not given us with the fulness that Isabel Archer is. To say which, of course, is to invite the reply that James didn't

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intend either to give us Isabel again or to give us with the same fulness anyone. Yet it still seems a fair comment that a James who had as much fulness of life to impart as informs *The Portrait of a Lady* couldn't have chosen to restrict himself by so ' triumphantly scientific ' and so *excluding* a method of presentment as that of *The Awkward Age*. Interest in technique is usurping here upon the interest that, in the greatest art, technique subserves.

> ' Ah, aren't we very much the same—simple lovers of life? That is of the finer essence of it which appeals to the consciousness—!'

This is said by one of the characters in *The Awkward Age*. The phrase, ' the finer essence which appeals to the consciousness,' suggests very well the nature of James's own preoccupation. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, we may say, he seeks the essence of a very much richer life than in *The Awkward Age*. In connexion with the latter book ' consciousness ' takes on a limiting suggestion: it suggests something too close to what is represented by the witty and sophisticated conversation into which the theme is distilled. And the reading that *The Awkward Age* exacts is, strongly sympathetic as are the feelings generated towards Nanda, Mr. Longdon and Mitchy, too intensively and predominantly a matter of the ' wits,' in a limiting sense, to permit of the profoundest and most massive imaginative effect.

Isabel Archer, who in *The Portrait of a Lady*, loving life, seeks ' the finer essence of it that appeals to the consciousness,' may be said to symbolize for James that essence at his richest apprehension of it. It is not for nothing that a whole volume is required to present, place and duly charge Isabel before the ' story,' in Mr. Stephen Spender's sense, begins ; or that the process involves the evocation of a rich and varied environment and background. And solid and actual as scene and persons are, and though the imagination that makes them so present to us is ironically perspicacious and supremely intelligent, there is something of James's ideal civilization about the England he evokes. Manners, the arts of social intercourse, do, in that mellow and spacious world—the world of Lord Warburton and his sisters, Ralph Touchett, and the old American banker his father—seem to express something truly and maturely humane, a spiritual fineness. That

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element of warm faith, or illusion, disappears from James's work along with the generous fulness of actuality as the 'scientific' elaborateness of 'doing' comes in. It is significant too that we cannot believe that the later James—the James of *The Golden Bowl*—would have dealt so mercilessly, would not have dealt at least a little complaisantly, with Gilbert Osmond, the æsthetic dilettante to whom Isabel falls a prey.

This development might suggest critical reflections regarding the essential nature and conditions of James's concern for 'the finer essence.' So peculiar an intensity of concern for consciousness might perhaps be seen as in itself an index of some correlated deficiency—an index of something, from the beginning, not quite sound, whole and thriving within and below. True, *The Bostonians*, with the poised wisdom of its comedy, and its richness of substance acquired largely in childhood and youth, doesn't encourage such reflections. But even of *The Portrait of a Lady* it might perhaps be suggested that its effect of rich vitality isn't quite simply an expression of rich and free first-hand living. The young American in *The Author of Beltraffio* says of the Author's house:

> 'there was imagination in the carpets and curtains, in the pictures and books, in the garden behind it, where certain old brown walls were muffled in creepers that appeared to me to have been copied from a masterpiece of one of the pre-Raphaelites. That was the way many things struck me at that time in England —as reproductions of something that had existed primarily in art or literature. It was not the picture, the poem, the fictive page, that seemed to me a copy ; these things were the originals, and the life of happy and distinguished people was fashioned in their image.'

—Something of the effect of *The Portrait of a Lady* is suggested there. And when, as in *The Princess Casamassima* (which brings so little comfort to those who would like to justify James by his interest in the class-war) he offers, uncharacteristically, something like an earthy and sappy vitality, it derives, significantly (it might be said), from Dickens, a literary source. Further, to corroborate the suggestion that James runs excessively to consciousness because of some failure about the roots and at the lower levels of life, there

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are such things as *The Turn of the Screw*, which (and it is not in this unique in James's work) doesn't show merely his insight into the psycho-pathology of others. The subconscious life behind that story, however much or little James may have been aware of the significance detected by Mr. Edmund Wilson, is not that of free and healthy functioning ; it is the subconscious life of a spirit in some important ways strained and starved.

But this is not the note to end on. It is a measure of our sense of the greatness of Henry James's genius that discussion should tend to stress mainly what he failed to do with it. But what achievement in the art of fiction—fiction as a completely serious art addressed to the adult mind—can we point to in English as surpassing his? Besides *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Bostonians*, *Washington Square*, *The Awkward Age* and *What Maisie Knew*, there is an impressive array of things—novels, *nouvelles*, short stories[1]—that will stand permanently as classics. And in *Partial Portraits* and *Notes on Novelists* he wrote some of the very little good criticism of fiction that is to be found.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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[1]The following should not be missed among his *nouvelles* and short stories (the list doesn't pretend to be exhaustive): The title-story and the *Turn of the Screw* in *The Aspern Papers*. All the stories (they are all about the literary life, significantly the theme of a number of James's best things) in *The Lesson of the Master*. *The Middle Years*, *Greville Fane*, *The Great Good Place* (the method of which answers to the account of the method of *Burnt Norton* given by D. W. Harding in last December's *Scrutiny*), *Four Meetings*, and the title-story in *The Author of Beltraffio*. *The Beast in the Jungle*, *Owen Wingrave*, and *The Jolly Corner* in *The Altar of the Dead*. *Daisy Miller*. *The Wheel of Time* and *John Delavoy* in *Lord Beaupré*. *In the Cage* in *What Maisie Knew*.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

CLASS-WAR CRITICISM

THE NOVEL TO-DAY, by Philip Henderson (Bodley Head, 7/6).

Mr. Henderson's thesis is that since ' the central issue of our age is the class-struggle ' no writer can avoid being ' in one camp or the other,' and ' the full force of every genuinely creative, free and honest spirit must be directed ' necessarily ' against the social order which maintains ' ' the constraints, tyrannies and shams which oppress ' man. He aims at dealing in a short book with the novelists of the whole of post-war Europe and America and their background from this point of view. Unfortunately Mr. Henderson has no adequate critical apparatus with which to tackle such a mass. He has one simple criterion: subject-matter, or as he would say, ideological content, and he thinks that by retailing the plot of a novel you can assess it and its author. This does not carry conviction, and the book's thesis suffers from the handling it gets. Practically every general proposition Mr. Henderson makes—and a disproportionately large amount of the book is in general terms—is either arguable, highly questionable or false, which is irritating even to a reader predisposed to sympathy and therefore unlikely to move anyone but the converted. There is a good deal of elementary anti-Fascist matter, which one hopes may do some good to the circulating library reader who picks this book up, and some of this—such as the placing of Mr. Eliot's unwholesome *After Strange Gods*—is all to the good.

It is on the positive side that the book fails. Mr. Henderson says originally that he merely ' attempted to discuss the way in which a few outstanding authors have attempted to solve the problems of living,' and if he had done so he would have performed a service. But he has not the personal sensibility that is required. Reading Mr. Henderson on the revolutionary and traditional novelists you get an insight into what the study of literature will be like after the Revolution, for of course the academic study of literature will be managed by the Hendersons and Charqueses, just as inevitably as the literary reviews will be run by the Alec Browns and Amabel Williams-Ellises. It is sad for some of us,

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though no doubt reassuring to others, to see that in essentials (that is, as far as literature is concerned) the new gang won't differ materially from the old gang. Mr. Henderson unfortunately is not revolutionary at all. Aside from having another set of theoretical *clichés* to flourish, he is just the academic lecturer in English we all know. There is the same parading of platitudes, the same hostility to anything that threatens his spiritual complacency, the same lumping together under arbitrary heads of writers on different planes, the same club spirit, the same inability to recognize an ass in a lion's skin, the same muddled self-contradiction, the same inability to make value-judgments and the same substitution for them of ' ideas ' and generalizations divorced from any actuality in experience, the same helplessness where particular analysis is needed and the same falling-back instead on incompatible judgments borrowed with or without acknowledgment from all the quarters of the compass (Mr. Henderson boxes it from Wyndham Lewis to Granville Hicks) ; all with the same depressing effect on the student.

Mr. Henderson's criticism is not revolutionary because it is not based on any fundamental, deeply-felt reorientation, he has no real insight into the problems he pretends to attack. For instance, he can label Lawrence ' a latter-day Baptist [see Mr. Eliot] and a Noble Savage ' [W. Lewis]—either of which is silly and both together ridiculous. Similarly there is a long account of the plot of *Strange Glory*, and a classing of L. H. Myers with Charles Morgan, almost identical with that which recently appeared, over another signature, in *The Criterion*. It turns out moreover that his animus against Myers—he mentions *The Root and the Flower* only to spurn it—is due to the criticism made in *Strange Glory* of the materialism of Soviet Russia, though the character who makes it ends his criticism with the optimistic declaration that ' Regeneration is there.' Mr. Henderson cannot forgive any writer who concerns himself with anything less external than the class-struggle and the Fascist-Communist battlefield, though he argues in his section called ' The New Humanism ' that ' the revolutionary novel sets itself to a creation of a new man . . . it will set before itself the conception of a classless society where man, free from oppression at last, will direct all his energies to the creation of a world worthy of himself.' What this free, leisured hygienic

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society will then find itself concerned with, one ventures to believe, is the nature of a world and a life worthy of itself, with in fact precisely those ' barren metaphysical problems,' discussed in terms of living in *The Root and the Flower*, which Mr. Henderson despises but which may turn out after all to be his ' things that lie at the root of all social life.' And it is typical of the muddled and superficial spirit in which Mr. Henderson approaches his subject that we can find him incidentally praising the French novel because ' Since Stendhal the novel in France has tended to become more and more a medium for the dissemination of ideas and the statement of values.' He is again in this the academic lecturer whose right hand knoweth not what his left hand doeth.

Mr. Henderson's superficiality exposes his whole thesis—which was worthy of a better exponent—to damaging comment. Whether the artist should throw himself in the narrow spirit Mr. Henderson desiderates into the social warfare of his time and whether he cannot do the right cause better service by devoting himself to the maintenance of its best values by the means proper to his art is still arguable. Posterity has mostly felt that ' Milton quenched his eyes in the service of a vulgar and unworthy faction ' and would have been a better poet—that is, of more use to society—if he hadn't. There are the notorious cases of Jane Austen and Sir Thomas Browne, who have always been considered valuable writers by posterity, but from whose writings no one would conclude that civic and European upheavals were taking place around them. On the other hand, the argument that because Shelley's more ambitious poems have revolutionary ideals they must be good poetry has always been made by people with the best intentions: yet the methods of literary criticism can demonstrate that such poetry may nevertheless, and does in Shelley's case, support and promote undesirable ways of feeling, that this is their real and inevitable though unconscious ' propaganda.' To ignore the methods of literary criticism is therefore dangerous, and Mr. Henderson actually falls into dangerous errors, as of putting forward Hemingway as ' a far more vital writer than any of these tepid stylists [Myers, etc.]. The more positive value of his books is to be found in the courageous and stoical attitude of his heroes, their freedom from self-pity and their self-control in an age of tortured nerves and publicly bleeding hearts.' It would be more

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salutary for the spiritual health of Mr. Henderson's party if the Communist literary critics diagnosed literature as literature before certifying or condemning it on ideological grounds. Mr. Granville Hicks has recently put it on record that he finds in Mrs. Mitchison's *We Have Been Warned* (reviewed in *Scrutiny*, Sept., 1935) ' the bursting forth of life itself ' of true revolutionary literature. A similar absence of literary—which is thus more than literary—sensibility is exhibited by Mr. Henderson habitually. He argues that Mr. Wyndham Lewis is an unsuccessful satirist because he does not direct his satire against a social object, and he subsequently puts forward Mr. Alec Brown as an important revolutionary novelist because he does ; yet Mr. Wyndham Lewis's satire is evidently what it is because its author is a hard-boiled self-indulgent egotist, and he would remain so as a novelist even if, like Mr. Alec Brown, his self-assertion had taken the form of backing the political party Mr. Henderson thinks will save us: however much it may be in Mr. Brown's favour that his heart is in the right place, from the point of view of literature Mr. Brown the novelist is just another and even worse Richard Aldington. Mr. Henderson would have been more successful as a propagandist if he had possessed such perceptions, for no one but the converted could believe after reading their novels that Mr. Alec Brown or M. André Malraux had in their very different ways anything valuable to contribute to the new spirit of man. No competent disinterested reader could be in doubt about the comparative value of Mr. Brown's *Daughters of Albion* and Mr. Myers's *The Root and the Flower* in freeing man from ' the constraints, tyrannies and shams which oppress him.' One would have thought M. Malraux's latest novel a considerable embarrassment to the revolutionary party ; and the nature of the violent material he works through in *La Condition Humaine*, with the journalistic method of slinging it together, could equally well, with a superficial change of doctrine, have come from a Fascist writer. And before hailing all fictions which deal in social problem material the left-wing critic might ask himself what purpose such a piece of propaganda can hope to serve, whether its author should not have been employed in doing something more worth doing and consequently harder, whether he is not indulging himself and his comrades by preaching to the converted. And also, what is the

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quality of the preaching. The harm that novels like *We Have Been Warned* and *To Tell the Truth* can do to the socialist cause in the minds of the only kind of people they could hope to affect—that is, the better educated reading public—must be considerable, not less for the unfortunate impression that they, together with Mr. Alec Brown's and similar novels, give of an absence of any standards of taste, together with a terrifying kind of complacency, in the English mouthpieces of the literary movement that Mr. Henderson hails.

On the other hand, Mr. Henderson's lack of literary sensibility has made him overlook left-wing novelists whose achievements if examined would have successfully illustrated his thesis. He only refers casually to Grace Lumpkin, for instance (in one sentence with half-a-dozen *un*comparable names) and does not mention James Farrell at all, yet such remarkable works of art as her *To Make My Bread* and his *Studs Lonigan*, which are in their very different ways examinations by means proper to the novel of the relation between individual and environment and which logically point the revolutionary moral, do genuinely reveal the unsatisfactoriness of Mr. Forster's *œuvre* and the limitations of Mrs. Woolf's (to take two points Mr. Henderson repeatedly tries to make in a blustering way). Most literary critics of any seriousness have long been aware of the weakness inherent in Mr. Forster's position as a novelist and the precariousness of Mrs. Woolf's, but they will probably feel that Mr. Henderson's ready explanation of these shortcomings is both simple and crude and that an investigation that started in practical criticism would go further and effect more.

Mr. Henderson is in fact an academic critic in the final damning sense: that he is out-of-date in being behind the experience of his time. Reliable report[1] says that Alexei Tolstoy, whose novels Mr. Henderson offers us as an example of ' a literature whose boldness, vitality and optimism contrasts sharply with ' the effete literatures produced by writers like Lawrence, Myers, Forster, V. Woolf . . . —that Alexei Tolstoy is just ' the perfect Soviet equivalent to the high-grade *Saturday Evening Post* writer . . . compared by a Russian to Booth Tarkington and Joseph Hergesheimer.' [The whole of Mr. Wilson's letter is of great interest in connection with

[1]Edmund Wilson, ' Letters in the Soviet Union,' writing from Russia in *The New Republic* for April 1st, 1936.

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Mr. Henderson's subject]. The new man may find the best work of D. H. Lawrence, as of other novelists not in the right camp, of more service than Mr. Henderson can imagine, just as it is said that the post-revolutionary Russians are turning back, dissatisfied with their post-revolutionary fiction, to their own classics. Only literary criticism can guard and protect values, and prevent the new-style Walpoles and Priestleys from ' cashing in on the market ' as Mr. Wilson suggests has been done in Russia, with its consequent danger of that lowering of standards and corrupting of values that the left-wing critics, not without help from us merely literary critics, have already discovered elsewhere, and on which they base their theoretical edifices.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

SALAVIN, by Georges Duhamel (Dent, 8/6).

STUDS LONIGAN, by James Farrell (Constable, 8/6).

For the same price you can get either the four novels about Salavin, now first translated into English and issued in one volume, or the three novels about Studs Lonigan, now introduced to the English reader in one volume. Both are good value for money and, as many might say, you can invest it in either niceness or nastiness. There is actually a choice to be made, because the admirer of *Salavin* is likely to find *Studs Lonigan* an intolerable presentation of brutality and the admirer of Mr. Farrell's art is not likely to find permanent nourishment in M. Duhamel's. A study more or less in the void of an attempt by an average man to achieve saint-hood can hardly be of much contemporary relevance, and the main source of interest for us lies in noting how infinitely less worthy it must have been if the same theme had been handled by any middlebrow English novelist. The French version has a chastity of style and—especially in the political-club passages in the third book—an intellectual maturity which no unremarkable English novelist could achieve. M. Duhamel's attitude to his subject is also interesting: at first it is neither merely humorous nor actually sentimental, and the result is an unusual kind of pathos, but his detachment rapidly breaks down and the fourth book is unmitigatedly sentimental.

There is no self-indulgent idealizing about Mr. Farrell's writings. If Huck Finn had been a Chicago Irish boy and Mark

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Twain had lived after Joyce instead of in an age when the proprieties had to be considered, the result might have been Mr. Farrell's first book, *Young Lonigan* ; if he had been capable of following up his hero's subsequent development and of drawing the moral from it we might have had *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* and *Judgment Day* too. Mr. Farrell does not enjoy brutality, he is not hard-boiled and his attitude to his material has nothing in common with Mr. Hemingway's. He is a profoundly moral writer and his saga is a tragedy. Its general implications are social and cultural, as his epigraph from Plato suggests [' Except in the case of some rarely gifted nature there never will be a good man who has not from his childhood been used to play amid things of beauty and make of them a joy and a study '] and his treatment—the book is written in the speech-idiom of Studs Lonigan—is explained in another epigraph ' A literature than cannot be vulgarized is no literature at all and will perish.' The brutality is inherent in the subject-matter—a state of society in which there is material prosperity but no standards of taste, an inert inherited religious system but actually moral barbarism. The ideal of toughness is the only attractive ideal poor Studs's environment offers, but Mr. Farrell does not accept it as a value and Studs is not an incarnation of it. The raw material is made tolerable because Mr. Farrell is implicitly dissociated from it, is implicitly criticizing the conditions that produce and foster it. And in spite of his condemnation of the Catholic church (which he exhibits as being quite useless as a moral force to combat barbarism) his standards of judgment are religious and his imagination informed by Catholicism. Instances are the effects obtained by such passages as that towards the end of the first book (the one which closes ' And Studs was afraid of old man death ') and the spiritual and physical damnation exhibited in the terrible *Judgment Day* volume with its *Dies irae* epigraph. By a fortunate accident of American history Mr. Farrell is able to identify his hero's failure with the economic collapse of the nation and Studs's tragedy expands to national proportions. Though Mr. Farrell is an extreme left-wing novelist and the space given to direct propaganda at the end of the saga may be thought by many of us to be excessive, his novel is not felt to be an illustration of a thesis but a work of art equally remarkable for its subject-matter and its distinction of style and tone.

Q.D.L.

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MALLARMÉ

SOME POEMS OF MALLARMÉ, Translated by Roger Fry, with Commentaries by Charles Mauron (Chatto and Windus, 7/6).

Whether English translations of French poets serve any useful purpose is a debatable point. Modern French poets have suffered so badly at the hands of English translators that there are good grounds for assuming that they don't. The appearance of Roger Fry's *Mallarmé*, however, provides an opportunity for making a distinction which is not made as often as it should be—the distinction between the translation which is offered as a *substitute* for the original, and the translation which is only intended as an *introduction* to it. There is probably no more serious deterrent to the study of French poetry than the sickly confections which pass for translations of the *Fleurs du mal* and no better introduction than good texts-and-translations; and it seems a pity that publication of them cannot be extended to poets who, though often discussed, are still only very imperfectly known in this country. It is almost impossible to understand the development of contemporary English poetry without being familiar with the School of Baudelaire, and this familiarity can hardly be gained with a public school knowledge of French. A great deal can be done by printing the French text with a literal translation on the opposite page. It clears up difficulties of syntax and vocabulary, and a competent translation can tell us a lot about the French poet's method. The addition of a good Commentary by a responsible critic is essential and might produce a really valuable book.

The practical difficulties are of course immense. Translations of Corbière and Laforgue would hardly be likely to have a large circulation, and in any case it would only be possible to publish a small selection of the poet's work. Even the volume under review contains only some thirty of the sixty poems in the definitive edition of Mallarmé's *Poèmes* and actually omits the celebrated *Prose pour des Esseintes*. Still, a production which induced *one Times* reviewer to read Mallarmé attentively for the first time has a claim on our respect.[1] Whatever the faults of execution, it is a

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, November 14th, 1936.

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move in the right direction ; and if the choice had fallen on almost any other modern poet but Mallarmé one might have felt inclined to call it a valuable book without more ado.

Roger Fry took such pains to make his translation as accurate as possible and the claims he made for it are so disarming in their modesty, that it would be ungenerous to go through the book looking for ' howlers,' or pointing out things that might have been more happily put. The only way of giving a fair indication of his ability as a translator is to compare his version of a complete poem with the original.

Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui
Va-t-il nous déchirer avec un coup d'aile ivre
Ce lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre
Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui!

Un cygne d'autrefois se souvient que c'est lui
Magnifique mais qui sans espoir se délivre
Pour n'avoir pas chanté la région où vivre
Quand du stérile hiver a resplendi l'ennui

Tout son col secouera cette blanche agonie
Par l'espace infligée à l'oiseau qui le nie,
Mais non l'horreur du sol où le plumage est pris.

Fantôme qu'à ce lieu son pur éclat assigne,
Il s'immobilise au songe froid de mépris
Que vêt parmi l'exil inutile le Cygne.

This virgin, beautiful and lively day
Will it tear with a stroke of its drunken wing
The hard, forgotten lake which haunts 'neath the frost
The transparent glacier of flights unflown!

A swan of past days recalls it is he
Magnificent but without hope who is freed
For not having sung the realm where to live
When sterile winter's ennui has shone forth.

All his neck will shake off this white agony
By space inflicted on the bird who denies it,
But not the horror of the soil where his plumage is caught.

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Fantom that to this place his brightness assigns him,
He is stilled in the icy dream of contempt
Which clothes in his useless exile the Swan.

I have chosen this poem because it shows the translator at his best and also because it illustrates the peculiar difficulties with which the translator of Mallarmé has to contend. The theme of the poem is the Swan's unsuccessful efforts to escape. ' The sonnet begins,' as M. Mauron points out in his Commentary, ' with a great beating of wings, or rather with a hope of flight.' Then ' little by little, the beating of the wings of the opening are fixed, held and crystallised. It is this death of an effort, this contraction of a hope, this retreat towards immobility imposed by the environment, which is the real subject of the poem.' In the French this is brilliantly represented by the alternation of the explosive v's, suggesting the bird's attempts to wrench itself free, and the hard thin i's, suggesting a continual falling back. More striking still is the way in which the poet uses the long o's in the last part of the poem to indicate the immobility which gradually extends over the whole scene and smothers movement.

The success of the poem is due so much to qualities which are inherent in the French language, that I do not believe that it would be possible to produce a satisfactory translation in another language. The chief virtue of the present translation is the literal fidelity with which it sticks to the French text. Its chief weaknesses are its flatness and tonelessness and a limpness which forms a strange contrast to the tautness of the original. But if Fry has failed to reproduce the hard, brittle glitter of the French, it must be remembered to his credit that he has avoided the common mistake of turning Mallarmé into something that looks like a belated contribution to *The Yellow Book*. More might have been done to preserve the effect of the French if the translator had not felt bound to produce a verse translation. It is significant that his failure is seldom due to direct mistranslation, but to apparently small things like the omission of the definite article (l. 1), or of a vital ' that ' (l. 5), or to a change of order (l. 1) which makes the whole clumsy and lifeless. There seems to have been no better reason for these changes than a desire to make the lines scan. In the same way the unfortunate translations of *vivace* by ' lively ' and *se souvient* by ' recalls ' seem to have been dictated by the

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need to find two-syllable words to fit the lines.

One of the things that make Mallarmé difficult to translate is a highly personal use of language. He not only ' works ' words in such a way that every word in the poem directly suggests the principal theme, but he also manages to confer on them a private meaning of his own which is sometimes difficult to discover. This process has been well described by Jacques Rivière in some of the most illuminating pages ever written on the poet.

Sans doute, he writes, *je tiens pour une très géniale et très importante découverte celle de cette vertu secrète en eux,* (he is speaking of words) *distincte de celle qu'ils ont de signifier, et qui leur permet d'absorber un peu de la sensibilité de l'écrivain et de l'emmener, à l'état de simple semence, dans un autre monde où elle refleurira. Nul plus que moi n'admire la façon dont chez Mallarmé ils se dégagent tout doucement de leur sens individuel, puis de leur solidarité logique, pour simplement finir, s'étant rejoints ailleurs, par éclore, par naître à plusieurs. Mais enfin, dans cette acception, ils cessent d'être des signes ; la valeur qu'ils recoivent est d'un ordre post-intellectuel. Ce qui détermine leur apparition, c'est désormais uniquement leur parenté intérieure avec tel ou tel aspect du sujet.*[1]

In other words, Mallarmé reveals a tendency—a tendency that becomes more marked as his work matures—to abandon the logical order altogether and to concentrate on the relations between words themselves. Words, as Rivière put it, are no longer ' signs,' but vehicles for the poet's sensibility. In order to understand a poem by Mallarmé, we must give up all idea of finding a logical structure and discover instead the particular significance that certain words have for the poet. A poem by Mallarmé is never a logical whole, but rather a train of feeling. It has no relation to anything outside the poet ; it is simply a succession of words whose only link is the fact that they are the expression of the same sensibility. *Mallarmé,* wrote Rivière in the same article,[2] [*est*] *tout occupé à ' fixer ' sa sensibilité en minutieux cristaux poétiques, à se déposer lui-même par petits paquets dans les mots*—which is one

[1]From an essay called ' Reconnaissance à Dada ' in the *Nouvelle Revue Française,* August, 1920, pp. 233-4.
[2]*Art cit.* p. 227.

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of the reasons, perhaps, why both Mallarmé and his distinguished disciple, Valéry, often seem to be the authors of great lines rather than great poets.

The divergence of logic and sensibility and the poet's peculiar handling of words are both well illustrated in the poem under discussion. We have M. Mauron's word for it that parts of the poem are incorrect even in French. It seems to me that the *se délivre* in l. 6 has no *logical* meaning at all: it is there because of its *parenté intérieure* with the subject. The word succeeds admirably in suggesting the Swan's effort to wrench itself free. The rhyme relates it to *vivre* and emphasizes the fact that it is a struggle for *life*. It also relates it to the *coup d'aile ivre* in l. 2. This association is important because it illustrates Mallarmé's power of fusing two statements which are logically impossible into a coherent whole. The image of day tearing the frozen lake with its drunken wing may have been suggested by the sight of a swan's wing reflected in the ice, but taken in itself it is impossible. The subsequent association of the day's wing with the swan's wing not only covers the logical flaw, but also gives the poem its particular unity. The beating of wings at the beginning creates a sense of expectancy, a hope of release by some force *outside* the prisoner ; but the hope is disappointed and the sound of the liberating wings merges into the sound of the Swan's own wings—the *inside* movement—beating in a hopeless struggle for freedom. It is the brilliant way in which the two different movements are combined that gives the poem its tension. In the translation, the effect is ruined by the use of the past tense: the point of the poem is that the Swan never was ' freed.'

Mallarmé's highly personal use of language is illustrated by the choice of a number of words all suggesting whiteness. M. Mauron reminds us that with Mallarmé whiteness is synonymous with sterility and death. It is true, but it is only part of the truth. What makes Mallarmé's use of words remarkable is his power of investing the same word with two contradictory meanings. White, for example, is a symbol of sterility, but it is also a symbol of perfection. For Mallarmé sterility and perfection are simply two aspects of the same thing or the same situation. The process is capable of considerable extension. In the present poem white is a symbol of sterility and death and at the same time of fertility and life. Thus *vierge*—the key word of the poem—means

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' inviolate,' ' unbroken,' and by extension it comes to mean ' unbroken, never-to-be-broken ' or sterility: it also means ' unbroken, to-be-broken ' or fertility. ' Virginity ' is a form of perfection, but so it the fertility which proceeds from the loss of virginity. It is precisely the virginal quality of the scene—the fact that it is ' intact '—which prevents the Swan from escaping and condemns him to ' sterility.' Only the loss of a virginity which never is lost could set him free. The play on white enables the poet to repeat this theme all through the poem like an echo.

A parallel is provided by another of Mallarmé's favourite words. *L'azur*—the blue sky towards which the Swan struggles—is a symbol of life ; but it inspires the poet with directly conflicting impulses. It is intensely desired, but also intensely feared. With the result that he is left suspended between an inclination to approach and an inclination to fly. In *L'Azur* he writes:

> De l'éternel azur la sereine ironie
> Accable, belle indolemment comme les fleurs,
> Le poète impuissant qui maudit son génie
> A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs.

It is only possible to understand Mallarmé's best work if we are aware of the double sense he attaches to certain words. The theme of much of his poetry is a sense of frustration—a frustration arising out of a dramatic conflict between two contrary sets of feeling such as we find in *L'Azur* and the *Swan*.

The success of the *Swan* lies in its poise, in the skill with which the poet holds the balance between the warring impulses. It is necessary to point out, however, that it is a curiously qualified success and that the ' poise ' of Mallarmé's poetry is something very different from the ' poise ' of Racine's. For in spite of the undeniable brilliance of execution, the more one examines the poem the more dubious one becomes about the authenticity of the experience. ' At this point,' remarks M. Mauron in the course of his exegesis, ' a question occurs: how was the Swan held prisoner? What prevented his flying? I remember an amusing discussion between two " Mallarméans," the first holding that the starting point of the poem was a swan whose wings had been clipped . . . ' M. Mauron, whose careful exegesis always seems to stop short at the point at which it ought to become criticism, dismisses the point

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as unimportant. ' The " beautiful day " arouses in the Swan a hope of escape, and escape is in fact impossible, *why* does not matter.' In fact, it is a point of the utmost importance. The truth is that there is nothing at all to prevent the Swan from escaping except the fact that *it does not want to escape*. The Swan is a convenient symbol of the poet's own struggle between conflicting impulses and the only reason why it is not resolved is because the poet does not wish it to be resolved. It shows unmistakably that Mallarmé's sense of frustration is in a curious way arbitrary, *voulu*. His preoccupation with sterility, with the agony of writing and the desire for ' Life,' is something very like self-indulgence. His poetry does not spring from a genuinely *complex* attitude, but is the product of careful and conscious arrangement. At no period of his career can Mallarmé be acquitted of deliberately *complicating* his feelings in the interests of his art.

This may not impair the charm of the poem, but it does draw attention to the inherent limitations of Mallarmé's art. When we look into it, we find that there is no clear or coherent attitude towards the universe behind Mallarmé's poetry, but a recoil from the world of human experience and an attempt to construct a private world in which the genuine problems that faced a poet writing in the nineteenth century are replaced by a fresh set of imaginary problems. In this respect his frustration bears a striking resemblance to Valéry's *angoisse métaphysique*. Neither is a genuine attitude towards the problems of the time, but a substitute for such an attitude which makes the poetry of both writers in the last analysis a poetry of refusal and escape.[1] Thus the urbanity, the elegance of much that they have written is indistinguishable from a particular form of unreality and is only made possible by the deliberate exclusion of whole tracts of human experience. Here the comparison which is often made between Racine and Valéry is very much to the point. For Racine's elegance is the expression of something real and living in the society of his time: it did nothing to mitigate the tumult of emotion and was never a substitute for insight into human feelings. The elegance of Mallarmé

[1]The *angoisse métaphysique* of the *Cimetière marin* might be compared with that of Mallarmé's *Igitur* and the *Coup de dés*. The same criticism applies to all three poems.

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and Valéry is a convention which instead of forming an organic link between the poet and his society and giving his work a social validity, as it did with Racine, is used to hide a fundamental rootlessness.

This is closely connected with another important aspect of Mallarmé's poetry—the vexed question of his obscurity. ' Part at least of the obscurity which so confounds us,' remarks M. Mauron, ' was intentional, in fact most deliberately planned. Mystery was in Mallarmé's view, one of the poet's instruments . . . ' It is clear from the context that M. Mauron is unaware that he is making a drastic criticism of Mallarmé's method. Mallarmé has long been regarded as the type of obscure poet, though the sort of obscurity we find in his poetry is still to be satisfactorily defined. There is still a snobbish tendency to pretend that the value of his work is in some way proportionate to its obscurity, whereas the reverse seems to me to be the truth. M. Mauron has placed English readers in his debt by showing—unwittingly, one fears—in his Commentaries how seldom the meaning of the later poems repays the labour expended in unravelling them.

M. Mauron thinks that Mallarmé's obscurity is due to the difficulty of getting ' used to a way of thinking which is very likely to be one's own.' No doubt it is agreeable to think so and it is easy to see why this view has been popular among the poet's admirers. For there has always been a tendency among them—a tendency encouraged by Mallarmé himself—to treat his work as a special kind of poetry and his readers as initiates. In fact, the difficulty is caused rather by verbal manipulations than by complexity of thought. The authentic difficulties of Mallarmé's poetry—the difficulties alluded to above—are nearly always of the same kind and with practice can be solved by something that might almost be called rule of thumb. It is a code of which one has to discover the key. But the difficulties which remain difficulties are of another order. They are due either to a genuine failure to communicate experience, or more often to an abuse of the function of language. Although both types of obscurity exist side by side in Mallarmé's later work, it is the second that predominates. Consider the following, for example:

> Une dentelle s'abolit
> Dans le doute du Jeu suprême

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A n'entr'ouvrir un blasphème
Qu'absence éternelle de lit

Cet unanime blanc conflit
D'une guirlande avec la même,
Enfui contre la vitre blême
Flotte plus qu'il n'ensevelit.

Mais chez qui du rêve se dore,
Tristement dort une mandore
Au creux néant musicien.

Telle que vers quelque fenêtre
Selon nul ventre que le sien,
Filial on aurait pu naître.

This poem is evidence of a progressive dissociation of language and experience which culminates in *Un coup de dés*. Words like *abolit, doute, absence, blanc, néant*, show that the poet's preoccupation with negation has accentuated to such a degree that the theme of the poem seems to be an absence of experience altogether. At this point all certain interpretation comes to an end. The full meaning of the piece obviously depends on the meaning of *Jeu suprême*. M. Mauron thinks that it may refer either to the sexual act or to the act of writing poetry. He finally decides for poetry on the ground that Mallarmé would never use a capital to describe anything but poetry. Although one naturally feels diffident in contesting a Frenchman's interpretation of French poetry, it is difficult to see how in its present context the *Jeu suprême* can be anything but the sexual act. The ironic description of the curtains solemnly parting to reveal a void in place of the bed and an embrace of curtains (*unanime blanc conflit*) instead of the contortions of non-existent lovers is characteristic of Mallarmé's later work and of the position of complete nihilism towards which he seemed to be struggling. But whatever the real interpretation, one thing is certain—a poem which can equally well be a description of the sexual act or of the act of writing poetry must have something badly wrong with it.

The tendency to dissociate language and experience is also apparent from the liking Mallarmé shows in his later work for the

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poetical conceit. One of the most characteristic examples in his description of sunset:

> Victorieusement fui le suicide beau
> Tison de gloire, sang par écume, or, tempête!
> O rire si là bas une pourpre s'apprête
> A ne tendre royal que mon absent tombeau!

In order to find anything remotely resembling this we shall have to go back to the seventeenth century. It is significant, however, that Mallarmé's conceits remind one not of the *functional* conceit of Donne, but of the *verbal* conceit of Cowley and Benlowes. The comparison is naturally all in Mallarmé's favour. His poem is at once wittier and more serious than anything that Cowley wrote. It is more serious because the purpose for which it was used was more serious. Seventeenth-century preciosity was a game and no more, but Mallarmé's preciosity was a game played in deadly earnest. The interest in language which he reveals in his latest work is neither fruitful nor healthy because language had become a means of evading experience instead of expressing it.

The nature of this failure becomes clearer when he is studied in relation to other poets of the period. There is a pronounced tendency on the part of Mallarmé's critics to stress his isolation without considering whether this isolation is an advantage or not—whether it is due to a development of the possibilities of the French language, or whether in fact it is due to a deviation from the French tradition that ends in a backwater. It is a tendency which is illustrated by M. Mauron's unsatisfactory and inconclusive introduction. ' His defences are no less firm on the literary side ; ' he writes, ' he is hardly touched even by the influence of Baudelaire.' Now Baudelaire's influence on his successors was so subtle and pervasive that a remark of this kind is extremely dangerous, particularly when no attempt is made to support it by argument. M. Mauron seems to have forgotten that *Les fenêtres* is an obvious imitation of the manner of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens* and that in *Renouveau* Mallarmé could write:

> Des crépuscules blancs tiédissent sous mon crâne
> Qu'un cercle de fer serre ainsi qu'un vieux tombeau
> Et, triste, j'erre après un rêve vague et beau,
> Par les champs où la sève immense se pavane . . .

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which reads like a parody of Baudelaire. It is true that neither of these poems is included in the present selection, but there is not the same excuse for *Brise marine* in which Mallarmé wrote

> Je partirai! Steamer balançant ta mâture,
> Lève l'ancre pour une exotique nature!

Of course it is open to M. Mauron to retort that the sort of influence one finds in *Les fenêtres* and *Renouveau*—both early poems—is unimportant and that in *Brise marine* Mallarmé was simply making use of an idea that was common among poets of the period. But on the face of it, it is unlikely that a young man of genius who was as strongly influenced by Baudelaire as Mallarmé was would emancipate himself completely from that influence in his later work, nor would it be desirable that he should. One would expect the crude influence of the early work to develop into something different and more important, as it did in the work of the other writers of the School. With Rimbaud and Laforgue, for example, the influence of Baudelaire is twofold. There is the *direct* influence that we find in their early work—the *Premiers vers* and the *Sanglot de la terre*—and the *indirect* influence that we find in their mature work. In the case of both Rimbaud and Laforgue it takes the form of a reaction against the style of Baudelaire, of a movement *away* from his method which produced the prose-poetry of the *Saison en enfer* and the free verse of the *Derniers vers*—both technical innovations of the utmost importance for the later history of European poetry.

It is Mallarmé's weakness as a poet that this second influence never led him to produce anything of the same value, and the reason is not hard to discover. One of the things that gives Baudelaire his gigantic stature among modern poets is the completeness with which he expressed the temper of his own time. The thoroughness with which he explored the mind and the lengths to which he pushed his analysis of emotional states opened up a new world to poetry and revolutionized existing ways of feeling. We may not like this world and we may not think that the state of mind expressed in the *Fleurs du mal* is a healthy one, but I do not think that we have a right to deny that this book is the record of something that happened to human nature and caused a radical alteration in the potentialities of experience. The *Fleurs du mal*

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changed the course of the main stream of French poetry and henceforth development could only proceed along the same lines. Later poets might and did modify Baudelaire's experience, but they could not reject his findings without sacrificing their integrity as poets.

Baudelaire's greatness does not consist least, to borrow a distinction of Mr. Eliot's, in the honesty with which he faced the *données* of the new world and which makes him the direct heir of the great French tradition. It is in this respect that Mallarmé is his inferior. It is clear from every line he wrote that Mallarmé, no less than Rimbaud and Laforgue, was aware of the world of which Baudelaire was in a sense the discoverer. Now the elaborate verbiage which we find in his later poetry arises precisely from a desire to escape from the interior world and exclude the fresh experiences which Baudelaire had made possible. Mallarmé's boasted intellectualism is not intellectualism at all, but a deliberate misuse of the mind. He does not use the mind as it should be used, in order to know, but in order to avoid knowing. Thus the *non-être* was a convenient mental fiction and the conflict between ' being ' and ' not-being,' which has exercised French critics so much, a new mythology that he invented in order to escape from actual experience.

This naturally applies to Mallarmé's supposed technical innovations. *Un coup de dés* has been widely regarded as a work of great technical originality ; but the importance of experiments must be judged by the uses to which they are put, nor must we forget that it is possible to be original in a vicious sense. Mallarmé's experiments were not dictated by the need of a more flexible medium ; they are simply evidence of a supreme effort to get outside human experience altogether. An estimate of *Un coup de dés* should be based on comparison not with the later work of Rimbaud and Laforgue, but with the later work of James Joyce. Thus Mallarmé's apparent development away from Baudelaire is not development at all, but a deviation from the main French tradition and leads into the wilderness.

Finally, something must be said about ' pure poetry ' for which this volume appears to be propaganda. A succinct definition occurs in Fry's early unfinished introduction which is printed at the end of the volume. ' Almost all works of art,' he wrote, ' are

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more or less impure ; that is to say, they allow or even excite in the contemplator echoes of the emotions which are aroused by actual life, such as pity, fear, desire, curiosity. So that our reaction to such works is (at all events for a time) compounded of certain emotional states which are connected with life, together with those purely detached emotions which are peculiar to esthetic apprehension.'

As a description of what Mallarmé tried to do and of the sort of attention he invites, it would be difficult to improve on Fry's words. It is clear, however, that ' pure poetry ' represents a drastic impoverishment of poetry. Although poetic experience is naturally to some extent a transformation of our everyday emotions, these emotions must form the raw materials of all sane art. Language is essentially a product of experience and must reflect it. The attempt to empty language of its content of experience and to use it to portray an intermediate region, in which the ghosts of emotions, which even in their natural state were never particularly robust, float aimlessly and unattached in the void, is nothing but a monstrous perversion of the basic function of language. It is a deliberate attempt to create an unnatural cleavage between literature and life. Poetry must be deeply rooted in the cultural life of the race, and the deeper the roots the more vital the art which springs from it. Once poetry is cut off from life, it necessarily dies of inanition. For this reason Mallarmé and Valéry, for all their great gifts, seem to me to be great poets in a *genre* which leads to the negation of poetry.

When two poets of rare endowment devote their lives to this form of poetry, when they are followed by innumerable critics who try to erect into a positive dogma what is plainly a radical failure on the part of the poet to deal with experience, there is every reason for uneasiness. For we are not concerned merely with a mistaken theory of art, but with a symptom of the state of the civilization in which we are living. It points to a deep-rooted despair, to a scepticism which can only lead to the disappearance not only of art, but of civilization itself. For we must not make the mistake of treating ' pure poetry ' as unimportant merely because it appears to be the preserve of a small sect. Nothing that has been written since shows the slightest indication of a change for the better in the general situation. The work of the

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Surréalistes and the Marxist group, though apparently based upon a fundamentally different conception of life, are in fact manifestations of the same tendency.[1] They reveal the same lack of any internal organization, the same fundamental inability to deal with the whole of experience. Their hysterical insistence on the importance of art could only be made by people who had completely lost their faith in art and merely serves to show how quickly the ravages of scepticism are proceeding.

G. M. TURNELL.

ANTI-ACADEMIC EXCURSION

THE MUSE IN CHAINS, by Stephen Potter (Cape, 7/6).

Mr. Potter has written a bright account of what 'English literature' means at present. His subject, briefly, is the externalization of literature: critics and teachers collect and impart 'facts about' authors and their works, English examinations test parrot-memory and fluency, and the rigours of fact-collection are tempered by gossipy essays and *belles-lettres*; tepid appreciation and inert respect for the pantheon of the dead take the place of the living (and therefore sensitive and discriminating) contact. Mr. Potter points out the connections. He makes plain, for example, how closely the Matriculation handbooks—all the wretched retarding paraphernalia connected with Matric. English—have, from the start, followed the requirements of the universities, and he shows how university teaching, from the time when English was first admitted as a 'subject,' has been crippled because no one thought of asking the right questions.

Readers of this review are not likely to find the case presented by Mr. Potter entirely unfamiliar, but they should welcome his documentation and many of his formulations. The point, really, is whether his criticism will go home. It is, to start with, a question of tactics, and I think that Mr. Potter has sacrificed too much in his fear of appearing professionally dull, a pedantic anti-pedant.

[1]The relation between Mallarmé and the *Surréalistes* is discussed by Rivière in the article referred to above.

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An example comes from his discussion of examinations. ' I believe,' he says, ' that the examination world brings to light two fairly constant " examination types." One of these is the "good student," whose fountain-pen slides and skates exhibitionistically over the page. Off glides sentence after easy sentence. Page after page. She (it is often a " she ") enjoys herself. She is rising to the occasion, she feels: she paralyses her neighbour by calls for extra sheets of paper . . . ' This is the kind of thing—Mr. Potter ought to know—that those who run the system are accustomed to joke about. Mr. Potter can't have felt pleased by some of the favourable reviews he has had ; idly belletristic they capped his stories and missed his points.

But more than tactics, more than style and manner, is involved. On page 204 Mr. Potter exposes the confusions and uncertainties which attended the founding of an English school at Oxford, and his own positives, as they are scattered through the book, are, as general formulations, admirable: ' to explore and understand new consciousnesses, different consciousnesses,' ' the art of writing as the art of breaking down confusing barriers of words between individuals,' and so on. But diagnosis and a short history of the disease are followed by some suggestions towards a remedy (reviewers seem to have overlooked the dozen pages on ' The Missing Subject '), and it is here that attention needs to be directed. One could object that it is doubtful how far or in what ways English is a ' subject ' at all—but it is more important to take up Mr. Potter's insistence on ' self-expression ' (' A " School of self-expression " '—p. 254). It is, I think, a fundamental error to make this a primary aim of English teaching. Of course children should be taught to write a plain thing in a plain way, and to put down their thoughts and feelings as honestly—*i.e.* as simply—as possible. But for Mr. Potter ' self-expression ' (he shows no qualms in using this glib and slippery word) means more than that.

> ' First, it must never again be a School of Reading-for-the-sake-of-reading. It must be Reading in order to know how to write. Writing and reading must go hand in hand. No student should read a Pope-Dryden heroic couplet satire, should study the characteristics of the Elizabethan sonnet, should " take

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drama," without himself attempting these forms, using as theme his own experience. Nor should he take notes on the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads without first elucidating what *he* thinks is the right language for poetry.'

There is space for only a few of the comments that this paragraph provokes. Certainly it indicates the way for a student to tackle a piece of critical writing (though, ' *the* right language for poetry ' ?), but the first two suggestions are surely nonsense. Doesn't Mr. Potter know that to show oneself adept at making ' Popeian ' couplets is already a short cut to a university ' first '? (It is a trick encouraged by examiners ; ' Write a criticism of *The Waste Land* in the style of *either* (a) Pope *or* (b) Dr. Johnson'—that, or something like it, has been set). And Mr. Potter leaves it conveniently uncertain whether the student is to use ' his own experience ' in order to ' attempt the form ' of ' An expense of spirit in a waste of shame ' or of that sonnet which ends, ' Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart and write.' ' Self-expression,' as Mr. Potter seems to intend it, is not a very satisfactory alternative to the prevailing formalism.

Several of Mr. Potter's practical suggestions are better—more discussable—than that. Everyone who shares his main antipathies will agree that period-covering isn't the best way of lecturing on English literature, that ' concentrated study of only three or four great writers ' is better than a scamper over three dozen, and it is only fair to say that Mr. Potter hints at a forthcoming book in which he will be able to make his positions plainer. But the looseness that I have commented on isn't confined to the passage quoted; it is pervasive. A programme, I know, can't be had for the asking, even a satisfactory definition of ' the function of English ' is something that only emerges—given some basis of agreement—from the give-and-take of discussion, and it would be absurd to make exaggerated demands of what is, after all, a post-script. But if Mr. Potter's thinking had been more effective here he might have found an energizing principle which would have guided and informed his attack. As it is, his book is a sort of field-day—no one is really alarmed by the explosions. And I'm sure Mr. Potter *wanted* to do some damage.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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THE REAL PRESERVATION OF RURAL ENGLAND

BY-ROAD, by Adrian Bell (Cobden-Sanderson, 7/6).

A reviewer, commenting on this book and admitting its interest, has complained that the questions raised are dealt with superficially. This criticism must mean that Mr. Bell does not expound a theory, but presents us with a picture from which we can draw our own opinions. I cannot see how a superficial book could raise so many interesting and important questions—questions which go deeper, even, than politics.

The book is by way of being a sequel to Mr. Bell's first trilogy ; it is written in the same way, but it deals with new developments in farming. A young man buys a farm which has always been unlucky, on account of its heavy and poor soil. To everyone's amazement he turns it into a fruit-farm, adding, later, dairy-farming and flowers. He sets up a fleet of vans and serves the neighbouring towns, employs many workers from the surrounding villages, and builds up a thriving business. The by-road of the title, formerly a muddy lane, becomes a smooth-surfaced road, down which speed motor-vans from one part of the farm to the other. Asbestos bungalows for the workers spring up. Nearly all the farm work is done by machinery, and it is Rayner's—the farmer's—idea to replace horses entirely by machines. A new community arises, whose ways of living acquired suddenly are different from the long-established life of the countryside. Yet Rayner's farm is not a commercial exploitation of the country-side, but something which he intends shall bring fresh life to it. He points out that his enterprise keeps the best country youths in the country instead of sending them into the town in search of better wages and more distraction. It is, in fact, preserving the countryside in a vital sense, instead of the museum sense that the term so often implies.

Opposed to Rayner in theory is Mr. Colville, the long-established farmer of traditional ways, and Miss Worsley, the elderly lady who lavishes care on the Tudor house she has bought, and has the garden made into a Tudor replica.

The story is merely that of Rayner's success. Mr. Bell does not take sides. His main interest is in Rayner's developments, but

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Colville is an old friend and the traditional wisdom of the older village generation is treated with respect and admiration. Neither is Miss Worsley an arty old maid—she is a lady of genuine refinement, with real interest and concern for the countryside.

The three attitudes thus shown are all worthy of attention. Miss Worsley's, however, obviously leads to a dead end. It is possible to sympathize with a dislike of mechanization in the country, and an admiration for thatched cottages and old-world gardens. But to wish to arrest change in rural life itself is profitless: the country will be reduced to the level of a picturesque museum, or a mere playground for the towns. Any action based on such a wish must defeat its own ends, for, by draining the country of life, urban and suburban inroads are made far easier. The real country-dweller does not approve of such an attitude—the countrywoman, Martha Weasden, is offered one of Rayner's asbestos bungalows, and, on hearing this, Miss Worsley offers to buy Martha's picturesque but dilapidated cottage, and repair it so that she need not leave it. Martha is alarmed at this prospect, and neither woman quite understands the other.

To choose between the traditional wisdom of the old life and Rayner's methods is not altogether necessary. With the farmers, one may well evolve into and include the other. Mechanized farming on a large scale is still the exception in England. If farmers adopt machinery, they have good reasons for doing so. The traditions of the older generation may die out—as long as the town holds more inducement than the country, for the young people, they are bound to die out. Even Rayner's experiments may extinguish these traditions or, rather, prevent their continuance. But such experiments are, at least, likely to create a satisfactory way of living—more satisfactory than the suburbanism which encroaches on the country, and affects comparatively remote villages, as a result of the influx to the towns.

Rayner is sometimes irritating in his enthusiasms and impatience, but he represents something important and vital. The asbestos bungalow may be offensive to the æsthetic townsman—I do not support its usual hideousness—but it is preferable to the derelict farm, the half-empty village, or the tumbledown cottage.

Mr. Bell's book is extremely interesting—perhaps the best he has written. It does not deal with class-war between masters and

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labourers, but with something far more deep-rooted—the future of the oldest part of English civilization. That such a book can be called ' superficial ' by a reviewer of some reputation shows the muddle of our thoughts and our lack of knowledge on an important subject, which doesn't happen to be a spectacular one.

FRANK CHAPMAN.

THE NEUTRAL STYLE

SELECTED POEMS, by Robert Frost, Chosen by the Author. With Introductory Essays by W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Paul Engle, Edwin Muir (Cape, 5/-).

I find it difficult to review the poems of Mr. Robert Frost, they left with me little more than an ill-defined general impression. I then looked at the introductions and back at some of the poems, and I was still not very interested. Mr. Auden suggests the well-known comparison with the work of Edward Thomas, and one knows that Mr. Frost was a friend of Thomas's and that his influence had an important part in stimulating the latter's poetic talent. I think that if I compare the last stanza of Mr. Frost's *Reluctance* with the ending of Thomas's *The Glory*, it will help to indicate why one comes away from the *Selected Poems* dissatisfied.

> Ah, when to the heart of man
> Was it ever less than treason
> To go with the drift of things,
> To yield with a grace to reason,
> And bow and accept the end
> Of a love or a season?

> And shall I ask at the day's end once more
> What beauty is, and what I can have meant
> By happiness? And shall I let all go,
> Glad, weary, or both? Or shall I perhaps know
> That I was happy oft and oft before,
> Awhile forgetting how I am fast pent,
> How dreary-swift, with nought to travel to,
> Is Time? I cannot bite the day to the core.

The Glory is one of Thomas's finest poems, while the Frost is not his very best, but nevertheless I think that one can make a fair

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comparison of their sensibilities from the two passages. They both use a diction pretty close to conversation—Mr. Frost is closest—but while Thomas concentrates, Mr. Frost is diffuse. His mood of acceptance is presented as easy and not unwelcome. Thomas too accepts the thwarting of his aspirations, yet one can feel in his rhythms the wistfulness and the effort it costs to forget his troubles, and then the last image carries, by its unexpected strength, the idea that some time he will bite the day to the core—both ideas have rich associations. Mr. Frost never achieves anything like this concentration in phrase and rhythm. In other words he is a poet of a simpler and less strenuous sensibility, despite much of his subject matter. His best poems, such as *Two look at Two* and *To Earthward*, communicate a single attitude to a single theme.

His longer poems, in which he depicts some incident in New England, *Home Burial, The Death of the Hired Man, Axe Helve*, never evoke anything so subtle and delicate as the sense of loneliness that Thomas's *Up in the Wind* gives one. They are an extreme instance of what Coleridge calls the 'neutral style' in poetry, and, as Coleridge says, important poetry in such a style is rare. I should imagine that Mr. Frost has done as much as can be done in his line, that of portraying aspects of the civilization which he represents with a minimum of transforming comment, nothing beyond the inevitable sentiments of a sensible and well-disposed man.

I find that his introducers see little more in Mr. Frost than this, except Mr. Day Lewis who compares him with Wordsworth. Mr. Muir explains his method with care, the key sentence being: '. . . his constant aim is to define them (words), that is to select one meaning out of the many they possess and use that only . . .' Mr. Engle says that Mr. Frost introduced him to the New England scene, his 'poetry was like a man speaking.' Mr. Auden emphasizes his 'unpoetical' character, and suggests that his attitude is: 'There are such people and they manage to live and you must take account of them. The values of any civilization are never complete.' All this seems to me to be true, but the introducers also imply that Mr. Frost is an important poet. He seems to me to be merely a pleasant one.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM IN INDIA

LANGUAGE, UNIVERSITIES AND NATIONALISM IN INDIA, by Som Nath Chib (Oxford University Press, Rs.1).

In this essay Mr. Chib deals admirably with the question of language and teaching in India, which is of fundamental importance for the political and cultural development of the country. He begins by examining the oft-repeated question: What is Hindustani? and analyses the possibilities of its becoming the *lingua franca* of India. He points out that, contrary to the general belief, India possesses no racial and lingual unity. There are 179 languages and 544 dialects to be found in India, belonging to three main families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Tibeto-Chinese. As regards the actual differences among these languages Sir George Grierson says in *The Linguistic Survey of India*:

> 'There are languages whose phonetic rules prohibit the existence of more than a few hundred words and there are others with opulent vocabularies rivalling English in their copiousness and in their accuracy of idea-connotation. There are languages that know neither noun nor verb and whose only grammatical feature is syntax ; and there are others with grammatical systems as completely worked as those of Greek and Latin.'

Hindustani, understood by a little less than half the population of India, has two written forms: Urdu and Hindi, respectively known as the languages of Muslims and Hindus. Urdu is written in the Arabic character with a considerable number of Persian words, while Hindi is written in the Devanagari character with an abundance of Sanskrit words. Mr. Chib notes with regret the drifting apart of the two languages. While he is correct in holding that the two languages are different in their written form he certainly exaggerates the difference between their spoken form. As one who saw the three Hindi films mentioned by Mr. Chib I cannot agree with him that they were incomprehensible to audiences in the Punjab ; and that 'some of them understood only as much of the dialogue as an English audience does of the dialogue in René Clair's pictures.' It would have been more correct to say that some of them understood as much of the dialogue as an English audience did of the dialogue of a typically American picture in

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the early days of the 'talkies.' Mr. Chib, like most writers on the subject, attributes the Persianization of Urdu and the Sanskritization of Hindi to communal jealousy. This is only partly true. The main reason is that, up to almost the end of the nineteenth century, the literatures of Urdu and Hindi contain no important works in philosophy, politics, economics and science. The impact of the Western civilization has made these subjects of increasing importance ; and with the revival of the vernaculars a need was felt for a new vocabulary capable of expressing new ideas adequately. As most of the writers of Urdu were familiar with Persian it was only natural that Persian words and phrases should be used by them ; the same is true of Hindi and the use of Sanskrit words.

Mr. Chib connects Pan-Islamism with the Persianization of Urdu and considers it a serious menace both to the development of Hindustani and the nationalist movement in India. He would be right if Pan-Islamism were anything but a still-born movement not yet decently buried. The idea of the Muslims of Asia forming a single political unit is more fantastic than he imagines. All that has happened during the last thirty years (especially since the War) has proved that the idea of Pan-Islamism is not only theoretically improbable but practically impossible. The late Professor E. G. Browne, a recognized authority on the Muslim countries, once described it as 'a mare's nest discovered by the Vienna correspondent of the *Times*.' The Western form of nationalism had begun to penetrate the East by the end of the nineteenth century, and just now, when the West is realizing painfully what a tragic blunder it has been, it is at its zenith in Asia. The Persians, always very proud of their cultural tradition, have not forgotten the destruction of their ancient civilization by the Arabs and the humiliation of recurring defeats at the hands of the barbarous Turks. The Turks have never forgiven the Persians for allowing them to acquire the Persian culture nor the Arabs for having given them a religion. And so on. The rivalry amongst the different Muslim countries is very acute. Kemal Ataturk has been trying to revive 'Turkish' culture by eliminating Arabic and Persian words from the language and by giving up all manners and customs connected with those countries. Only a few months ago came the news, from Persia, of the formation of a committee to

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' purify ' the Persian language. This means, in practice, the removal of about 50 per cent. of the existing Arabic words from the language and their replacement by words of pre-Muslim Persia. Similar instances of nationalism could be given about the Muslims of Egypt, China and Russia. The relative popularity of the idea of Pan-Islamism with the educated Muslims of northern India is due to the fact that some of the best poems of Iqbal happen to advocate it. But a movement that can only thrive on the support of the masses can achieve nothing if it be merely bolstered up by a few intellectuals. Mr. Chib sometimes allows his indignation to distort the facts.

Secondly he bases his arguments on figures of the Census of 1931 while admitting that ' the census commissioner bitterly complains that the 1931 census operations were carried on in an atmosphere full of communal recriminations and mutual hatred.' The figures given by the author himself show that in the Punjab, while only 3 and .4 per cent. of the candidates for Matriculation answered their history papers in Hindi and Gurmukhi respectively and 89 per cent. in Urdu, the census of the same year shows the percentage of literate people knowing Hindi and Gurmukhi as 17 and 14 respectively. In other words the number of people knowing Gurmukhi is shown to be 35 times more by the census report.

Mr. Chib comes to the pessimistic conclusion that Hindustani cannot, in the near future, become the language of the whole of India. At the very best it will be used ' for propaganda through films and wireless broadcasting.' One may or may not agree with this but on his proposal of using the vernaculars, instead of English, as the medium of instruction there can be no two opinions. After some controversy between the orientalists and the anglicists, in which Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 in favour of English was an important factor, it was decided to use English as the medium of instruction throughout India. This experiment, started a hundred years ago, has proved to be a disastrous failure with tragic repercussions on the cultural life of India. The waste it has entailed and the misery, suffering and mental confusion it has caused to the students is untold. Mr. Chib might have given some examples of the English by an average graduate of an Indian University. They would certainly make Macaulay turn in his grave if he saw them. No one who is at all familiar with the educational system of India can disagree with Mr. Chib when he says:

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> ' Yet hundreds of thousands of them (Indian students) who cannot write five lines of correct English, who often do not know when to say "' Yes " and when to say " No " in answer to a question, are made to read *en masse* Shelley's *Skylark*, Milton's *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* and Shakespeare's plays. They have never seen a skylark . . . They cannot make head or tail of Milton's personifications and they are ignorant of the conventions of the Elizabethan stage as an Englishman is of the conventions of Persian poetry . . . Yet they must write critiques at the examinations on various problems of *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*.'

The confusion resulting from this state of affairs can well be imagined. Mr. Chib goes so far as to say that ' the educational system as it exists to-day is not only a farce, but a fraud perpetuated on unsuspecting millions.' As Mr. H. N. Brailsford says, in the foreword to this essay, ' one language only holds the key to our emotions ' and that is our mother tongue. Some people object that the vernaculars are not yet developed enough to serve as medium of instruction for a modern educational system. The answer to these objections is that you cannot put the cart before the horse. The adequate supply of suitable text-books, for example, depends on the demand for them and there is no reason to suppose that there will be a shortage of these when the need arises.

In spite of his vigorous advocacy of the vernaculars Mr. Chib is not in favour of giving up English. He suggests that it should be taught ' in all secondary and higher educational institutions in India as a compulsory but second language. English literature will become one of the optional subjects like all other subjects. He considers it to be the best language for purposes of ' administration, trade, commerce, communication and to conduct the business of the Federal Assembly.' Apart from that we cannot afford to isolate ourselves from the main currents of Western thought.

On the whole Mr. Chib's short survey of linguistic and educational problems of India is balanced and penetrating. He deserves credit for facing the facts realistically and avoiding the pitfalls of emotional nationalism.

A. A. HAMID.

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YEATS AND THE ENGLISH TRADITION

THE OXFORD BOOK OF MODERN VERSE, 1892-1935, Chosen by W. B. Yeats (Oxford University Press, 8/6).

Someone in *Country Life* writes that ' the Oxford Book of-Anything- has come to stand happily in our minds for the profit and pleasure of accuracy, scholarship and fine taste.' And without wishing to endorse everything in the other Oxford Books of Verse one can say that they have a high representative value. It is therefore astounding that the present selection should appear in this series. Although, as recent anthologies have made distressingly clear, there seems no longer to be a general consensus of opinion as to which are the better modern poems, so that every choice must seem unduly personal, it does appear a counsel of despair to entrust the selection to one whose taste is merely eccentric. And if the word should appear too severe for the selection, the perverse ' introduction ' fully deserves it.

Any observations upon the book bear consequently more on the interests of Mr. Yeats than on the problem of an adequate anthology of modern poetry. First of all, it seems probable that the greater part of what has been written between the years 1892 and 1935 just hasn't interested him at all. At any rate, he has reprinted the standard anthology favourites of, for instance, Ralph Hodgson, Gordon Bottomley, Flecker, Newbolt and Julian Grenfell. Wilfred Owen, T. E. Hulme and Isaac Rosenberg do not appear, though they may have been excluded as being ' War Poets.' For ' certain poems written in the midst of the great war ' are dismissed on the grounds that ' passive suffering is not a theme for poetry.' At the other end his choice of the younger poets seems to follow the current values (against which various protests have been made in these pages) so closely that it is only charitable to suppose that his interest in them is recent and slight.

Some of his positive preferences remain to me frankly inexplicable. ' I think England has had more good poets from 1900 to the present day than during any period of the same length since the early seventeenth century,' he says in his Introduction. If the number of pages allotted to each poet counts for anything Edith Sitwell with eighteen and Walter James Turner with seventeen are our most important poets. And that their eminent position

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in the anthology is not accidental is made clear by the claims made for them in the Introduction. Loyalty to his friends no doubt explains the favourable treatment of Johnson, Dowson and Sturge Moore. But as for the Irish brigade which is given such prominence one can only quote against Yeats his own lines ' to a poet who would have me praise certain bad poets, imitators of his and mine '—

> You say, as I have often given tongue
> In praise of what another's said or sung,
> 'Twere politic to do the like by these ;
> But was there ever dog that praised his fleas?

Nothing so much marks the distinction between the ability to criticize in the act of writing a poem and the power of criticizing the poems of others, as his remarks on Eliot and Hopkins. It is almost as though he did not understand the tradition of which he is a part. At any rate, he speaks of Eliot's ' rhythmical flatness,' and says ' nor can I put the Eliot of *The Waste Land* among those that descend from Shakespeare and the translators of the Bible. I think of him as satirist rather than poet.' Against Hopkins he seems to hold a temperamental aversion. ' I suspect a bias born when I began to think.' Yeats gives a ludicrous account of ' sprung verse ' and prints the lesser poems. The selections from Hardy and Pound (though monetary considerations may have entered here) point the same way. Only one poem of Edward Thomas is given.

Yeats's self-depreciatory remarks on his own position (' I, too, have tried to be modern ') recall forcibly what Lawrence had to say about ' art-speech.' His own poems, chosen from his later work, coming between his contemporaries, Arthur Symons

> (And the mandolins and they,
> Faintlier breathing, swoon
> Into the rose and grey
> Ecstasy of the moon)

and Ernest Dowson

> (Wine and women and song
> Three things garnish our way :
> Yet is day over-long),

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accentuate the deficiencies of the chronological method, and provide a criticism (or, at least, another selection could), of the whole period covered by this anthology. He towers over so many schools, or, as he prefers to put it, ' writing through fifty years I have been now of the same school with John Synge and James Stephens, now in that of Sturge Moore and the younger ' Michael Field ' : and though the concentration of philosophy and social passion of the school of Day Lewis and in Macneice lay beyond my desire, I would, but for a failure of talent have been in that of Turner and Dorothy Wellesley.'

American Poetry is not represented.

H. A. MASON.

A SILENT CENSORSHIP?

Reference was made in the review of *The Big Money* in the last number of *Scrutiny* to the omission from the English edition of passages which appeared in the American edition published by Harcourt, Brace and Company. A closer comparison of the two reinforces some of the points of the review while it corrects a slightly false impression of the extent of the difference between them. There is, curiously enough, no reference in the English edition to the extensive omissions and modifications of the American copyright edition. The reason for some of the slighter changes can readily be understood. For instance, on pages 137, 302, 303, 341, phrases involving words which are not printed in full in the American edition are omitted, or other words are substituted. (Though in one case the offending word appears elsewhere in the book without change, and some of the words have appeared in other books printed in England). Another batch of omissions may be due to squeamishness. On pages 137, 178, 221 (all episodes involving sexual intercourse) unexceptionable phrases are omitted which reinforce what is already implied in the account. For instance, Doris says to Charley, ' " you're taking precautions, aren't you?" " Sure thing," said Charley through clenched teeth *and went to his bureau for a condom.*' In the English edition the words in italics are omitted. Another set of omissions may have been made to avoid the English libel laws. Uncomplimentary references to personages ranging from the former Prince of Wales to Gordon Craig are excised. But until we reach the last section of the book

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no bulky omission occurs. This last section *Power Superpower* has been extensively toned down and re-written in vaguer language to avoid the pointed particularity of the original.

I don't know whether changes of this sort are regularly made in English editions of American books. Is not the reader, in any case, entitled to know that he is not reading an exact reprint of the original? I have not yet dealt with the omissions partly referred to in the review. The English text ends on p. 532 of the American edition where *two* more episodes follow. There is a further section of Mary French in which she is abandoned by Don Stevens who visits Russia on essential party business. Ben Compton is expelled from the party (' oppositionist—exceptionalism—a lot of nonsense,' he tells Mary). Mary's mother marries an ex-judge and both do well on the stock-exchange. Mary refuses once more to return to Colorado Springs. She goes with Ada to a cocktail party at Eveline Johnson's. There she meets George Barrow who tries to defend himself from the charge of being a ' laborfaker,' and confesses to having wasted his life. At the party Margo Dowling is the most distinguished guest. (Though her career is threatened by the introduction of ' talkies '). Eveline is ' just living on her nerve ' since Charles Edward Holden is engaged to marry somebody else. An interesting passage occurs when Ada, Mary and George Barrow leave the party. Ada says, ' Oh Mary . . . I wish everybody wasn't so unhappy.'

' " It's the waste," Mary cried out savagely, suddenly able to articulate . . . " The food they waste and the money they waste while our people starve in tarpaper barracks." " The contradictions of capitalism," said George Barrow with a knowing leer. " How about a bite to eat?" '

The next day Mary learns of the murder of Eddy Spellman who had been running a truckload of food to the Pittsburgh strikers, and of the suicide of Eveline Johnson. Mary becomes secretary of the protest committee at Pittsburgh. Then follows the sketch called Vag.

In these thirty pages the trilogy is drawn to the close to which its own nature pointed. As far as I can see, there is nothing ' obscene ' or libellous here to justify the truncation of an artist's plan. It would be interesting to learn why they were omitted from the English edition.

H.A.M.

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AESCHYLUS AND THE MODERN IDIOM

THE AGAMEMNON OF AESCHYLUS, translated by Louis Macneice (Faber and Faber, 5/-).

Though it would not be exactly fair to blame Milton for the quality of the average translation of the poetical classics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is no doubt but that a survey made after the manner of Mr. Pound's essays on the Elizabethan Classicists would reveal Milton's as one of the predominant influences. Nor has the field been worked over since in the new idiom made available by the success of the modern poets. The publisher's blurb claims that this is the first ' contemporary ' translation of the *Agamemnon* to be made by a poet. Though, of course, more than ' a modern idiom ' is required to make a new translation. It may be doubted whether in our time the classical plays can be assimilated into modern life, as they were, say, in the time of Dryden or Pope. Yet the new standards in verse-writing which imply (among other things) a criticism of the ' Miltonic ' tradition, offer (if nothing more) the prospect of an improvement on the nineteenth century pattern.

The *Agamemnon* was an ambitious choice for a first attempt. For so much of the effect of the play comes through the language, and the language offers two contrary difficulties ; at the one end the inextricable compounding of words, the violent piling on of adjectives, the bizarre imagery, in short, all that was found odd and striking by an Aristophanes ; and at the other, the stark aphorisms— *πάθει μάθος* and the like—the extreme simplicity of the phrasing of the central ' messages.'

Mr. Macneice confesses that he has sacrificed ' the liturgical flavour of the diction.' Without considering the seriousness of the sacrifice we may note that it does enable him on the whole to avoid the inflated language belonging to the ' Miltonic ' style. Indeed, so anxious does he seem to have been to avoid any excesses that he actually tones down Aeschylus in his characteristic audacities. His translation is in fact too quiet: rhythmically it seems never to have been alive. Passages can be taken out at random wherever the book opens. The first that comes is:

> Whenever I think to sing or hum to myself
> As an antidote to sleep, then everytime I groan,

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And fall to weeping for the fortunes of this house
Where not as before are things well ordered now.

This is a translation of lines 16-19 of the Oxford Text. The ' sense ' is all there (though what has become of *ἐντέμνων* ?) ; but the language offers little else. Indeed, the last line reminds me of Mr. Bohn's translators.

The ' modernity ' comes out, I suppose, in phrases like these:

my age can still
Be galvanised to breathe

or in this:

Her prayers and her cries of father
Her life of a maiden
Counted for nothing with those militarists.

Though one could counter with,

The barren care which clogs my heart.

His treatment of the *στιχμυθία* reminds me of Housman's parody. Where the language flares up a little reference to the original shows that he is paraphrasing, *e.g.*

The grace of the gods is forced on us
Throned inviolably.

The last phrase is presumably for *σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων*

The translation, then, is a notable break with a bad tradition. It keeps reasonably close to the original while using solid, everyday words. (One tends to be pleased merely to see words like ' spit ' and ' guts ' in a translation of Aeschylus). It is not afraid of being matter of fact. There are its virtues. They permit a good deal of the play to ' come across.' But as for the modern idiom, my impression is that this is no language at all. It is most irritating to modulate from a slangy modern phrase into the foreign phraseology of the Greek. For instance, this:

The fact is she is mad, she listens to evil thoughts,
Who has come here leaving a city newly-captured
Without experience how to bear the bridle
So as not to waste her strength in foam and blood.
I will not spend more words to be ignored.

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The actors don't sound either like Greeks or Englishmen ; with the result that the play seems as far-off, unreal, and its poetry as unreachable, as it is for one who has only a construing knowledge of the original.

H. A. MASON.

THE NOTEBOOKS AND PAPERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, Edited with Notes and a Preface by Humphrey House (Oxford University Press, 25/-).

It is as well to say straight away that those who approach this volume with expectations derived from the *Letters* will be disappointed. It is simply a collection of more or less interesting omniana, not likely, as the letters were, to achieve the rank of a classic. The contents include extracts from early note-books, a journal for the years 1868 to 1875, some lecture-notes, sermons, and comments on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyala. The early diaries have some interesting illustrations of Hopkins' characteristic preoccupation with language: the etymological note on ' horn,' for instance, gives some idea of the number of associations of which he was conscious when using a word—confirming the impressions one would have gathered from the poetry. The fragments of early verses, while often very conventionally Victorian, have here and there forecasts of the later manner—an unusually concrete phrase, or a characteristic repetition—' Must you be gorged with proof?'—' Sickened and thickened by the glare of sand '—' the poor and stinting weald.' The dialogue *On the Origin of Beauty* may well, as the editor suggests, have been written for Pater ; but most of these notes on rhythm and language have striking perceptions here and there, as when, in the 1868 note on words, he speaks of imagery ' of sight or sound or *scapes* of the other senses.' His own imagery was to make conspicuous use of those ' *scapes* of the other senses.'

The journal is full of careful and precise observations of nature, so precise, sometimes, as to become pedantic. At their best these descriptions have an imaginative power which suggests the imagery of the poems: often they seem to be a sort of exercise, sometimes a training undergone simply for its own sake, as in the more rigorously scientific observations. The journal never reveals Hopkins' character as fully as the letters, and Mr. House

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is obviously wrong in describing it as ' his most important work in prose.' Its chief interest is in the evidence of a habit of seeking precise words to define experience: a habit which leads to the use of those curious personal terms—' inscape,' ' instress ' and the rest. It is difficult to see what Hopkins gained from this personal vocabulary: it may be partly a result of isolation and lack of opportunities for literary discussion.

The lecture notes on rhythm are disappointingly academic, and contribute little to our appreciation of Hopkins' own practice. The sermons and religious notes illustrate the development of his religious philosophy, and his individual mode of expression (he was often checked for this by his superiors). Mr. House has provided an extremely elaborate apparatus of notes, a very full index, and a bibliography of the manuscripts, and the book is expensively produced ; but in spite of all this, it is on the whole disappointing.

R. G. Cox.

TRAVELS IN TWO DEMOCRACIES, by Edmund Wilson (Harcourt, Brace, New York, $2.50).

' The place to study the present crisis and its causes and probable consequences is not in the charts of the compilers of statistics, but in one's self and in the people one sees. That is what I have tried to do in this book.' So wrote Wilson in the conclusion of *The American Jitters*. There he justified the claim that the observations of a cultivated person (' a bourgeois American with a slightly outside point of view '—his own account) upon the American scene have an unique value. Studies of civilizations tend to suffer from a lack of concreteness and sociological surveys tend to ignore essential data. The method he uses is to make his study of a particular facet of American life lead up to and flow out from a core of personally observed fact. In his most successful pieces very little need be added to this core. The chosen episode and the chosen ' angle ' provide all the commentary required. How far it falls short of ' literature ' may be seen by comparing his account of Henry Ford with that given by Dos Passos in *The Big Money*. But the similarity of outlook is striking. There is a sketch in *Travels in Two Democracies* called ' What to do till the doctor comes ' which might well have been an episode from the life of a Dos Passos character. *The American Jitters* is a type of reporting

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which is a contribution to the understanding of American civilization fit to be put alongside the observations of a man like Santayana.

In the course of his survey of America in the year of the slump Wilson was converted to the view that the new generation of radicals must ' look to Russia, in spite of all the differences between Russian and American conditions, as a model of what a state should be—because it is as yet the only example of the communistic society they desire.' He took the natural step of visiting the U.S.S.R. *Travels in Two Democracies* is an account of further observations in America from November 1932 to May 1934, and a trip through the U.S.S.R. during six months (May to October) of 1935. But it is one thing to travel in one's own country and another to travel in a strange land. When he turns from the reporting of incidents and phases of life in America to what he has seen in Russia, it at once becomes apparent to what an extent his American reports rest on an accumulated observation and understanding which has led to their selection. In the U.S.S.R. he has to rely on what comes to hand to provide the material upon which his cultivated outlook can work. Consequently some of the most remarkable bits of evidence come from other people's reports. The following is a typical instance: ' The Russian who had brought me, a writer, whose special subject was collective farms, had just been explaining apologetically that the entertainment was æsthetically unsatisfactory because the folk art had died with the old life and could only be revived self-consciously while, on the other hand, nothing had been evolved to take its place.' But when Wilson himself visits a collective farm his account is surprisingly meagre on this central question. And though this is one of the main impressions he gathered from his visit, he is unable to present the evidence so that we are compelled to share his opinion. Indeed, it is rather surprising when he reports merely in a conversation, ' they had cut themselves loose from the past and they didn't yet have the future for which they had worked so hard.' Again, after describing the Park of Culture and Rest, he breaks off to say, ' the whole world is stalled. Capitalism runs down, ceases to function ; Communism makes little progress.'

But his moods are valuable evidence when they reveal the difficulties of maintaining a clear head in describing Russia. Again

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and again his awareness of the difficulties is acute enough to inspire confidence in his report. On the other hand, the readiness with which he discovers the ' essential character ' of the Russians would make a sociologist smile. Further, critical as he has shown himself to be of America, he remains enough of an American in outlook for his comment on Russian life to appear occasionally merely American. And one of the results of his visit has been to bring home to him the unique value of American institutions. ' This discussion . . . and a number of other incidents, had made me feel as I had never done before, that being American did mean something unique . . . ' ' I feel convinced, since I have been to Russia, that American republican institutions, disastrously as they are always being abused, have some permanent and absolute value.'

With all these limitations the book remains a valuable piece of reporting (some of the best sections were printed in *The New Republic*) ; and in writing of the ' decided hysterical edge to the upper reaches of Moscow life,' of the general atmosphere of suspicion, the difficulties of writers, the position of Stalin towards the public, he presents an order of facts which can only be successfully approached by a man of his gifts and by the use of his methods.

H. A. MASON.

THE OLIVE TREE, by Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 7/6).

In their spring list (one or two pages of which incidentally provide a little innocent fun for the suitably cynical) the publishers of *Everyman's* announce that a selection from Mr. Huxley is to be added to the library. It will consist of half a dozen stories and a number of essays. Publishers presumably know their own business best, and it might be rash to assert that a different selection would have sold better. But from another point of view that kind of anthology is not particularly welcome ; a volume of essays only would find a market which is closed to the new *Everyman*.

It's commonplace to say that the gap between the latest developments in art, literature, sociology and so on and the study of these in places of education is so great that you can't see from one side to the other. And we need scores of Angells, Huxleys and

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Stuart Chases to do the ferrying. It is in this capacity that Mr. Aldous Huxley is most interesting to the pedagogue who finds in the essays some needed criticisms of the contemporary scene. Not that the stories haven't a use—they often serve as a tonic in the growth of the adolescent. But they couldn't be included in the kind of selection from Mr. Huxley that one wants ; it would consist of about half *The Olive Tree*, some of the items from *On the Margin*, the pacifist pamphlet, especially if it could be arranged to print Mr. Day Lewis' reply after it, and a speech made at the Albert Hall towards the end of last year.

The conditions (journalism) under which most of the essays in *The Olive Tree* appeared require that there shall be plenty of topical illustration and not too much hard chewing on one page—a diet which may not suit all adults, but good for the boy of sixteen or eighteen who has been kept uncontaminated by ideas. Nor in any ordinary sense of the word can they be called propaganda, which again is fortunate, because on the young and intelligent propaganda always works by counter-suggestion. The short note on *New-fashioned Christmas* is characteristic; it describes the commercialization of that season, and stimulates observation of other festivals and emotions which are tapped for profit. Another comment that one is glad to see in permanent form is the excellent deflation of the excuses made for the purchase of the Codex Sinaiticus at £100,000 ; the manuscript is forgotten, but the behaviour which it occasioned is perennial and typical.

The essay on *Justifications* falls on the dilettante side. The title promised something more serious—an examination of the mechanism in, say, industrialists, the clergy and others during the war, and the bellicose kind of pacifist to-day. As it is, it consists of an account, amusing enough, of the goings-on of one H. J. Prince—a case of justification too eccentric to prompt in the reader a habit of examining motives. The most ambitious piece in the book, *Writers and Readers*, discusses the nature and limitations of the influence of books upon those who read them ; and is interesting more in the questions it raises than it answers. He points out, as others have done, that political propaganda in the press does not always produce results in proportion to its volume: but he does not mention the extensive indirect results—habits of thinking and feeling—brought about by the newspapers, which must surely come under the heading of propaganda.

D.T.

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THE ENGLISH PRESS, NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS, by Jane Soames, with a Preface by Hilaire Belloc (Stanley Nott, 3/6)

There isn't space to do much more than recommend Miss Soames' excellent little book. On the whole she confines herself to clarifying, documenting and reinforcing 'what everybody knows'—things that can't be too well known. The main insistence is on the control of the press by a very small ring of profit-makers, on the almost complete lack of a real opposition press (there are some enlightening asides on the Odhams *Daily Herald*), on misleading selection and emphasis in the presentation of 'news,' and on the way in which the law of libel—an effective censorship—strangles necessary comment on matters of public interest ('the defence of fair comment . . . is all too often a broken reed'). Perhaps the most important chapter is on 'Some Omissions'—things which the public are not allowed to know: how many people, for example, know anything about the recent establishment of a large body of voluntary police in London? 'In this country we are never told why prominent people are given their posts, or by whom; by what methods well-known persons have made their money—and above all are we totally unaccustomed to anything like real attack on the Government, its personnel, policy and methods.' There are some useful comparisons with French newspapers, and with the English press in the nineteenth century. ('There is nothing to replace the lively uncensored comment upon public affairs which our great-grandfathers assumed to be essential to the formation of public opinion'). And those who believe that the dissemination of information of this kind is only useful in conjunction with an educational effort will find some fodder in these pages; a comparison of the vigorous *Times* leader of 1831 (p. 105) with its modern equivalent is not, I know, beyond the powers of an average W.E.A. class.

L.C.K.

U.D.C. PAMPHLETS:

A Catholic Looks at Spain, José Maria de Semprún Gurrea.

Survey of the International Committee of Non-Intervention in Spain. Union of Democratic Control, 34 Victoria Street, S. W.1.

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